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ABSTRACT

The Miscellaneous section of the proceedings contains the following papers: "Hype versus Substance in the Final Weeks of the Broadcast Television Networks' 2000 Presidential Election Campaign Coverage" (Julia R. Fox and James Angelini); "Commercial Quality Influence on Perceptions of Television News" (Stephen Perry, Dana Trunnell; Chris Moore, and Cori Ellis) "To Be on TV or To Be a TV Journalist: Students' and Professionals' Perceptions of the Role of Journalism in Society" (Ron F. Smith and George Bagley); "Network Television Coverage of the 1980 and 1984 Olympic Boycotts: A Content Analysis of the Evening News on ABC, CBS, and NBC" (Anthony Moretti); "Gatekeeping International News: An Attitudinal Profile of U.S. Television Journalists" (Hun Shik Kim); "A Content Analysis of Television News Magazines: Commodification and Public Interest" (Kuo-Feng Tseng); "Agenda Setting and Its Theoretical Elaboration" (Namkee Park); "National News Cultures: Towards a Profile of Journalists Using Cross-National Survey Findings" (Mark Deuze); and "Civic Journalism in the 2000 U.S. Senate Race in Virginia" (David Kennamer and Jeff South). (RS)

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Hype Versus Substance in the Final Weeks of the Broadcast Television Networks' 2000 Presidential Election Campaign Coverage

Paper Submitted to The Radio-Television Journalism Division of the
Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication for possible
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Running Head: Hype Versus Substance

Hype Versus Substance in the Final Weeks of the Broadcast Television Networks' 2000 Presidential Election Campaign Coverage

Television is the primary source of presidential election information for the majority of Americans (Graber, 1993; Hernandez, 1997; Manheim, 1984). As television news has increased in importance as a source of presidential election information during the past few decades, many content analyses have examined the television networks' news coverage of presidential election campaigns during the last 25 years. A robust and much criticized finding of these studies has been an emphasis on the "horserace" aspects of the campaign, rather than on more substantial coverage of campaign issues (Arterton, 1984; Broh, 1980, 1983; Clancey & Robinson, 1985; Foote & Rimmer, 1983; Fox, 1995; Graber, 1976, 1980; Greenfield, 1982; Hofstetter, 1981; Joslyn, 1984; Lichter, Amundson, & Noyes, 1988; Lichter & Lichter, 1996; Marshall, 1983; Mickelson, 1989; O'Keefe & Atwood, 1981; Patterson, 1977, 1980; Patterson & McClure, 1976; Ranney, 1983; Robinson & Sheehan, 1980; Sahr, 1983; Schram, 1987; Wilson, 1983). Researchers have also long criticized the networks' emphasis on the hoopla surrounding political campaigns. "ABC, CBS, and NBC devote most of their election coverage to the trivia of election campaigning that make for flashy pictures. Hecklers, crowds, motorcades, balloons, rallies and gossip – these are the regular subjects of the network campaign stories" (Patterson & McClure, 1976, pp. 21-22).

A content analysis of the television networks' coverage of the final weeks of the 1988 presidential election campaign found the emphasis to be on horserace and hoopla, rather than on issues and candidate qualifications, in both the audio and video messages of the news stories (Fox, 1995). But a similar study of the final two weeks of the broadcast television networks' coverage of the 1996 presidential election campaign found that, while there was still more hype than substance in the visuals, there was no significant difference between the amount of hype and the amount of substance when the audio and video messages were combined, and when the audio messages were analyzed separately (Fox & Goble, 1997). There was significantly less discussion of horserace in the 1996 campaign stories than in the 1988 campaign stories, and significantly less hype in general in the audio of the 1996 campaign stories than in the audio of the 1988 campaign stories (Fox & Goble, 1997). There was also significantly more substantive coverage in both the audio and video messages of the broadcast television networks campaign coverage in 1996 than in 1988 (Fox & Goble, 1997). On average, there was almost twice as much discussion of issues in the 1996 campaign stories than in the 1988 campaign stories (Fox & Goble, 1997). Similarly, there was more than twice as much time devoted to issues in the video of the campaign stories in 1996 than in 1988 (Fox & Goble, 1997). This suggested that the broadcast networks were moving in the direction of increasing the percentage of substantive presidential election coverage and decreasing the percentage of hype coverage (Fox & Goble, 1997).

However, for the 2000 presidential election campaign coverage it appeared as if it would be business as usual for the television networks in terms of the longstanding emphasis of hype over substance. During a visit to Indiana University prior to the election, ABC's Sam Donaldson argued that the election would be won on tactics, and that the results would depend on which candidate the voters liked best (Meunier, 2000). Donaldson suggested that images, such as Al Gore kissing his wife, Tipper, at the convention, influenced the candidate preferences that likely voters expressed in public opinion polls (Meunier, 2000). If Donaldson's remarks typified the views of other broadcast television network news gatekeepers, then there would be good reason to expect the broadcast networks' coverage to reflect a similar emphasis on images and campaign tactics. Thus, it is predicted (**Hypothesis 1**) that this analysis will find significantly more hype than substance in the final two weeks of the broadcast television networks' coverage of the 2000 presidential election campaign:

H1a when the audio and video messages are analyzed together,

H1b when the audio messages are analyzed separately, and

H1c when the video messages are analyzed separately.

This study focuses on the final weeks of campaign coverage, as studies have shown that voters making up their minds at the end of a campaign tend to be less partisan and more likely to use--and to be influenced by--media messages in making their decisions (Chaffee & Choe, 1980; Katz, 1973; Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1944; Mendelsohn & O'Keefe, 1975; O'Keefe, 1979). A Rasmussen Research national poll of likely voters during the final full week of campaigning in the 2000 presidential election campaign found more than five percent of those surveyed had not yet determined which candidate would receive their votes ("Voter details," n.d.). As late as the weekend before election day, a CNN/USA Today/Gallup national poll of likely voters found three percent of those surveyed still undecided (Newport, 2000a). Although that percentage had narrowed to just one percent by the day before the election (Newport, 2000b), even a margin that small is enough to swing an election, as evidenced by the final vote counts in 2000 in Iowa, New

Hampshire, New Mexico, Oregon, Wisconsin, and, or course, Florida. For these reasons, an examination specifically of the final weeks of campaign coverage is warranted.

This study also analyzes the audio and video messages separately, as those messages can be either dissonant or redundant, and recent research suggests that viewers process audio and video messages differently (Lang, Potter, & Bolls, 1999). Specifically, Lang, Bolls, and Potter (1999) found that when they increased the cognitive load of television messages, by varying the pacing and arousal, video recognition did not suffer, although audio recognition did. These findings suggest that visual information processing is relatively automatic, whereas audio processing is more controlled and therefore more likely to suffer when the cognitive demands of processing a television message exceed the viewer's available cognitive processing resources (Lang, Bolls, & Potter, 1999). Thus, when the visual and audio messages of television news stories about the presidential election campaign differ, people are more likely to remember the video message than the audio message. As previous content analyses have found more substance in the audio than in the video messages of the broadcast television networks' presidential election campaign coverage (Fox & Goble, 1997), this study predicts (**Hypothesis 2**) that even when there is substantive coverage in the audio messages, much of the accompanying visuals will emphasize hype rather than substance.

Method

Sampling

As with other such studies (Fox, 1995; Fox & Goble, 1997; Hofstetter, 1976; Patterson & McClure), errors associated with sampling do not pose a threat to this research as the study does not attempt random or stratified sampling, but instead utilizes a saturation sample by examining all newscasts for the entire period under consideration.

This study analyzes the broadcast television networks' nightly news coverage of the final two weeks of the 2000 presidential election campaign, analyzing the content of news stories about the presidential election campaign in the weekday nightly newscasts of ABC's *World News Tonight with Peter Jennings*, CBS's *Evening News with Dan Rather*, and NBC's *The Nightly News with Tom Brokaw* on October 25, 26, 27, 30, 31 and November 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7.

Coding

The study examines the amount of time in the audio and video messages of the presidential election campaign stories devoted to the study constructs of hype, as measured with the categories of horse race and hoopla, versus substance, as measured with the categories of campaign issues and candidate qualifications. The coding scheme used in this study is identical to the coding scheme used in previous studies comparing hype and substance in the final two weeks of the broadcast television networks' presidential election campaign coverage (Fox, 1995; Fox & Goble, 1997).

Hype includes the concepts of (1) horse race, defined as images of or references to the actual campaign contest as indicated by polls, strategies, tactics, and endorsements, and (2) hoopla, defined as images of or references to activities and items related to campaign events such as rallies, photo opportunities, hand shaking, ball throwing, flag waving, baby kissing, balloons, motorcades, crowds, and celebrities.

Substance includes the concepts of (1) candidate qualifications, defined as images of or references to the candidates' experience in terms of previous political accomplishments and positions held, and (2) campaign issues, defined as images of or references to issues in the party platforms such as the environment, the economy, education, crime, health care, foreign affairs, and defense.

Like similar studies, the news story was used as the unit of analysis to determine which stories were about the presidential election campaign (Broh, 1980, 1983; Clancey & Robinson, 1985; Fox, 1995; Fox & Goble, 1997; Graber, 1976, 1980; Hofstetter, 1976, 1978; Lichty & Bailey, 1978; Meadow, 1983; Ostroff, 1984; Patterson & McClure, 1976; Robinson, 1985; Robinson & Sheehan, 1980; Sahr, 1983; Stevenson, Eisinger, Feinberg, & Kotok, 1973). The stories coded were presented either as readers by the anchors or as packages by reporters preceded by an anchor lead-in. Teasers for upcoming stories preceding commercial breaks were not coded.

The study coder was provided directions, category and concept definitions and examples, and sample completed coding sheets for a newscast.

Reliability and Validity

Face validity of the instrument was initially tested with a group of three undergraduate communication students at Cornell University who first coded and then discussed their coding of a sample 1988 newscast with the primary researcher to determine if there was agreement on the study concepts and operationalizations (Fox, 1995). The instrument and coder instructions were revised slightly following that discussion.

The 2000 study coder was checked for both inter- and intra-coder reliability. To check for coder inter-reliability, the 2000 study coder coded a newscast from the 1996 presidential election coverage that was used to test coder reliability in a previous study of the 1996 election coverage (Fox & Goble, 1997). The total seconds that the 2000 study coder recorded for each of the four categories (issues, qualifications, horse race, and hoopla) in both audio and video messages in the presidential election news stories from that newscast were compared to those recorded by the study coders from the previous study. According to Riffe, Lacy, and Fico (1998), Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) is used for coder reliability with interval and ratio level data, such as the number of seconds of network evening news coverage devoted to a topic, to measure the degree to which the coders vary together. Pearson correlation coefficients indicated that the study coder correlated quite highly with coders from the previous study when distances correlations were computed to measure the similarities between the study coder and the four previous study coders (r=.811, r=.849, r=.862, and r=.93).

Coder intra-reliability was tested by having the study coder analyze the reliability sample again the following week. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r=1.0) indicated that the study coder had high intra-coder reliability when a distance correlation was calculated to compare the 2000 coder's first coding and second coding of the same newscast. Using these reliability criteria, the study coder was found to be reliable, and additional support was found for the instrument's validity.

Results

There was significantly more combined audio and video hype than substance in the campaign stories run during the final two weeks of the 2000 campaign coverage (t=12.76, df=155; p(2-tailed)<.001). The study hypothesis (H1a) that predicted there would be more hype than substance in the network news coverage of the final two weeks of the 2000 presidential election campaign when the audio and video messages were analyzed together is supported.

The separate analysis of audio messages also found significantly more hype (mean=76 seconds) than substance (mean=21 seconds) in the 2000 campaign coverage ($t=10.44$, $df=155$; $p(2\text{-tailed})<.001$). The study hypothesis (H1b) that predicted there would be more hype than substance in the 2000 campaign coverage when the audio messages were analyzed separately is supported.

Also as predicted (H1c), there was significantly more hype (mean=60 seconds) than substance (mean=6 seconds) in the video messages in the 2000 campaign coverage ($t=10.79$, $df=155$; $p(2\text{-tailed})<.001$). The study hypothesis (H1c) that predicted there would be more hype than substance in the 2000 campaign coverage when the video messages were analyzed separately is supported.

A significant positive correlation between audio substance and video hype coverage ($r=.343$, $p<.01$) supports study hypothesis two, that even when the audio coverage was substantive, much of the accompanying visuals emphasized hype rather than substance.

Discussion

The trend toward less hype and more substance in the broadcast television networks' 1996 campaign coverage did not continue during the 2000 presidential election campaign. There was considerably more hype than substance in the broadcast television networks' campaign coverage during the final two weeks of the 2000 election campaign in both the audio and video messages of the news stories. Perhaps even more concerning, for much of the audio coverage that was substantive in nature, the accompanying visuals still emphasized hype rather than substance. As the recent work by Lang, Bolls, and Potter (1999) supports the long-held conventional wisdom that television viewing favors visual processing rather than audio message processing, those substantive audio messages may have been wasted effort, if the visuals were remembered but the audio messages were not.

It should be noted that, while this study focuses exclusively on the final two weeks of the campaign, there may be more substantive coverage earlier in the campaign, as candidates' qualifications and stands on issues are likely to be discussed when candidates first announce their intentions to seek office. Unfortunately, given the increasing costs of campaigning and thus increasing demands for fundraising, candidates announce their candidacies early on, often before many voters are paying much attention to campaign coverage. Given the nature of news reporting, as long as those qualifications and issue stands don't change they may not be reported again later in the campaign, as they will no longer be considered new information. But the final weeks of a campaign is a particularly important time for the television networks to provide substantive campaign coverage to voters, and plenty of it, as those voters who haven't yet made their choices--often a substantial enough number to swing an election--are looking to television for campaign information.

Finally, in addition to the need for more substantive coverage, reporters should take care to match substantive audio messages with similarly substantive visuals to further illustrate the points being made in the audio messages, rather than using visually interesting hype messages that may compete for and ultimately dominate viewers' message processing resources at the expense of the important audio information.

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Commercial Quality Influence on Perceptions of Television News

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Running Head: QUALITY

Commercial Quality Influence on Perceptions of Television News

Abstract

The impact of high and low-quality commercials upon high and low quality television newscasts were examined using Elaboration Likelihood Model and contrast effects research. This study showed some support for contrast effects. Results also suggest an interaction between news quality and the presence of commercials within newscasts in producing an emotional response. Additionally, we found that when commercials were present within the news program, participants were able to recall fewer of the news stories.

Commercial Quality Influence on Perceptions of Television News

Television news programming serves an important function in society. Not only does it provide information, but it also serves to entertain the viewer (Duke, 2000). Consumers of news programming have many options when choosing a particular program from which to obtain their information---Several local market news programs, national broadcast news programs, and cable news channels. Therefore, it is important to examine factors that influence viewer's perceptions of news programming. In this study we will look at the influence of commercial presence and commercial quality across two different quality level news programs.

Several studies have examined the influence of television programming upon commercial effectiveness (Celuch & Slama, 1993, France & Park, 1997, Kamins, Marks & Skinner, 1991). Recently, however, commercials have come under examination as influencing factors upon enjoyment of television programming. A few studies have been conducted to analyze the effect television commercials have on the programs they are embedded in. Finn and Hickson (1986) studied the impact of inserting arousing commercials into a slow-paced news program. The results, although not overwhelmingly conclusive, found that segments with commercials were "consistently judged to be less biased and more accurate, more responsible, and more reliable" than segments which showed no commercials (p. 371). While this is the only study to date concerning commercial influence on news, others have examined entertainment programming. Perry, Jenzowski, Hester, King and Yi (1997) found that increased humor in commercials resulted in greater program liking in humorous television shows. They found that this held true across two different types of humorous television programs—stand-up comedy and a humorous talk show—since high humor commercials increased enjoyment for both types of shows. Most research that has studied commercial effects on programming has employed the principles of excitation transfer theory to predict the influences commercials have upon television programming (Bjorna et al., 2001, Finn & Hickson, 1986, Perry, 2001, Perry et al. 1997). This theory suggests that a high arousal state will extend into a post exposure state. Therefore, high arousal levels in commercials should extend to program enjoyment as well.

To date, studies of commercial influence have focused on arousal concepts, but an element that has been virtually ignored as a contributing factor to program enjoyment is the quality of commercials. Our study herein will further Finn and Hickson's (1986) study by examining how the quality of commercials influences viewers' perceptions of news programming while examining the competing theoretical foundations of Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) and contrast effects (Becker & Villanova, 1995, Perry, 1998). The ELM theory suggests that people will be likely to associate quality commercials with quality programming through a peripheral processing route, and, therefore, may associate a low quality program as higher quality simply because of the high quality of the commercials inserted into the program. The contrast effects theory suggests that higher quality levels in commercials could make programs seem lower quality by comparison and vice versa.

Attitudes toward Commercials

The audience often sees commercials as filler space or clutter between program segments. There is a significant amount of research, which suggests that television audience members view commercials negatively. Mittal (1994) explains that commercials are often described as irritating and boring, indicating a general distaste for commercial break periods. Additionally, research has shown that channel-surfing and ignoring of commercials frequently occurs during commercial breaks (Eastman & Newton, 1995, Eastman & Newton 1999).

However, commercials are not always viewed in such a pessimistic light. For example, Mittal (1994) found that about half of viewer respondents said they agreed with the statement, "Sometimes TV commercials are even more entertaining than TV programs" (p. 43). In fact, Pavelchak, Antil & Munch (1988) suggest that in programs such as the Super Bowl, advertising is often better liked than the actual program itself. Greene (1992) indicates that there are many different attributes that contribute to audience enjoyment of television commercials. Surprisingly, entertainment functions such as amusement, fast-moving images and imagination are not as important to enjoyment of an ad as are communicative/persuasive functions such as effectiveness, conviction and images that are worth remembering.

Still, there seems to be no consistent definition of "quality" in the literature in terms of commercials. We suggest that quality commercials employ the strategies of enjoyment as outlined by Greene as well as professionalism in the realm of production. Suggested here is that commercial quality can be a function of the money and effort spent on production.

Quality of News Programming

In addition to conceptualizing the characteristics of a quality commercial, it is necessary to define a quality newscast. A few studies have examined viewers' perceptions of the quality of news programming. Lind (1995) found that while definitions for quality production in news are sparse, viewers do believe that many news shows can be improved. Further, viewers suggested that they feel the responsibility lies on the viewer, not the producer to demand and instigate more quality in news programming. Therefore, it seems that quality is an important measure that viewers take into consideration when choosing their news. Rosenthiel and Gottlieb (1999) have outlined a definition of quality news programming. They say that a quality program is one that:

> Accurately reflect[s] their entire community, cover[s] a broad range of topics, focus[es] on what is significant, make[s] it locally relevant, balance[s] stories with multiple points of view, and rel[ies] on authoritative sources (p. 83).

Rosenthiel and Gottlieb (1999) also offer standards for a "good newscast." These standards include airing stories that cover a wide variety of topics, have local relevance, use a number of sources and find sources with expertise on the topic being covered. The same study indicates that viewers' perceptions of a quality newscast influences ratings. For example, the lowest rating programs in the study had fewer elements of a quality program than those that received the highest ratings.

Commercial Effects on Program Perception

Most research that looks at the interaction between programming and advertising has been interested in factors such as ad placement within commercial pods (Gutenko, 1997, Lipman, 1989, Webb & Ray, 1979) and whether advertising effectiveness is impacted by congruence of mood between the ad and program (Celuch & Slama, 1993; Gunter, Furnham & Frost, 1994). The Finn and Hickson (1986) and Perry et al. (1997) studies, however, were among the first to study the effects of commercials on programming. Both found that when arousing commercials were used it enhanced evaluation of programs. Perry (2001) again studied the effects of humorous commercials on television sitcom liking, but controlled for gender. The study found that men were more likely to find a program more enjoyable due to higher levels of humor in commercials while there was no difference in program appreciation by women. He attributed this difference to the lack of appreciation of the show by women overall, suggesting that the episode must have some desirable qualities in order to be enhanced by humorous or other arousing commercials.

Not all studies have shown a favorable connection between commercial arousal and program appreciation. Perry (1998) reevaluated his prior research, testing the effects humorous commercials have on television sitcoms. He found for the sitcom *Dharma & Greg* that when commercial humor was highest appreciation was lower than when more moderate levels of commercial humor were used. Similarly, Bjorna et al. (2001) reported that arousing, high-energy commercials detracted from enjoyment of the program *Crocodile Hunter*, though some hightening in enjoyment was found for the program *Friends*. When they conducted a similar experiment to test the effect of varied levels of humor in commercials on the same two programs, no significant differences were caused.

While early studies based on excitation transfer theory indicated that higher levels of commercial arousal enhanced the enjoyment of television programs, results are now less clear with results indicating that a distraction or contrast effect (competition hypothesis) may be a better explanation. Still, we see that commercials often impact the programs in which they air though the theoretical basis for such impact is unclear.

A totally different theoretical basis for explaining the impact of commercials on programming could come from the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM). No one has yet looked outside of the area of arousal in commercials to find an impact. It seems likely that higher quality commercials could provide cues that would lead viewers to perceive television news programming to be of higher quality due to ELM. However, no studies have looked at the impact of differing levels of quality commercials on programming. This, of course, means none have examined commercial quality impact on news. This study will compare commercial quality with viewers' perceptions of differing quality levels of news programming.

Elaboration Likelihood Model

Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) predicts the probability of critical thinking about a particular stimuli. More specifically, the ELM attempts to predict how individuals will process new information that is presented to them. For example, according to ELM, people process information using both central and peripheral routes. The central processing route involves critical thinking based on motivation factors including, involvement, diversity of the argument, and level of enjoyment of critical thinking. Peripheral processing routes often occur when information is new and the respondent is less involved (Petty, Cacioppo & Goldman, 1981; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Thus, a viewer may see a program as lower in quality because of peripheral cues not cognitively processed. We are interested in whether that cue could be a low-quality commercial pod. Gottlieb and Swan (1990) tested the ELM in a study that examined the effect price savings had on the motivation of subjects to process a print advertising message. This research found that the ELM may have implications on how consumers view source credibility, depending on whether the subject is highly involved (central processing) or less involved (peripheral processing) and depending on whether or not the information is new. Gottlieb and Swan suggest from their findings that perceived source credibility was higher when the subject was involved on only a peripheral processing level. Bozman and Mueling (1994) also studied advertising and its relationship with the ELM. This study looked at the implementation of music backgrounds (peripheral cues) in television commercials and the subsequent effects on viewers' attitudes and behaviors. It was found that these peripheral cues were highly effective as persuasion devices.

Contrast Effects

The competing theoretical perspective, contrast effects (competition hypothesis), which also may impinge on our study predicts that when two stimuli that are different in quantity, quality or some other measure are rated together, a contrast will exist--one stimuli will increase in measure, while the other will decrease. As Becker and Villanova (1995) point out, the contrast effect is greater and more pronounced when one stimuli is perceived to be average in measure. Becker and Villanova studied the procedure of performance appraisal and the effect of temporal delay between viewing a performance and rating it in terms of the magnitude of contrast effects. This research identified that contrast effects were influenced by both the performance rating procedure and the length of delay.

Gutierres and Kenrick (1999) also examined contrast effects in regards to mate selection. Specifically, the authors hypothesized that women would be more adversely affected as perceived marriage partners when their mates were exposed to highly attractive women in contrast with highly dominant women. Also, men would be more adversely affected as perceived marriage partners when their mates were exposed to highly dominant men in contrast with highly attractive men. Similarly, because of a perceived connection to how their mates would respond when confronted with an attractive or dominant person of the opposite sex, the authors predict that subjects would react in accordance with the hypothesized perceived behavior of their mate when confronted with a member of the *same* sex. The findings suggest that there are, in fact, contrast effects present in that men perceive themselves to be less effective as marriage partners when confronted with a dominant male and females consider themselves worse marriage partners after being confronted by a highly attractive female.

In relation to advertising's effect on program perception, both Perry (1998) and Bjorna et al. (2001) found support for contrast effects as described earlier. Perry called this occurrence a distraction effect. However, he could have as easily explained his findings under contrast effects.

In summary, while the ELM implies that higher quality commercials will result in heightened perceptions of the news characteristics, we also acknowledge that under contrast effects a high quality level in commercials could actually compete with and render of lesser perceived quality the programming it is paired with and vice versa

Research Question & Hypothesis

This study examines whether commercial quality will have an impact on viewer perceptions of television news programming. Since the advertisements and news programs we use are taken from television markets not in the immediate area of the testing location, we suggest that the information presented to subjects is new and that viewers will be less involved with the content. Therefore, this allows that viewers will respond to the effects of television commercials on news programming using peripheral processing routes as described by the ELM. If viewers only process the program through peripheral routes, ad quality will be more able to influence viewers' perceptions of news programming. However, peripheral processing does not rule out the possibility of a contrast effect. In fact, if viewers separate the news content from the advertising content, even if done subliminally, this would encourage the emergence of contrast effects.

Due to discrepant theories, the following research question is offered:

RQ_1 How will the quality of commercials influence viewers' perceptions of newscasts?

In addition to the above research question, it is also expected that, in accordance with the results of Finn and Hickson (1986), the absence of commercials will result in lower viewer perceptions of the news entertainment values and other news qualities. Therefore:

H_1 Newscasts with commercials will be perceived as higher in entertainment values and news qualities than those without commercials.

Method

Eighty-four undergraduates, from a midwestern university were participants in this study. The students were enrolled in various undergraduate classes and received a small amount of extra credit for their participation. The subjects were assigned randomly to one of six experimental conditions tested across twelve experimental sessions. Sessions were allowed a maximum of twenty participants.

Each session consisted of showing the participants a segment of A) a high quality newscast or B) a low quality newscast. Two levels of newscasts were employed in order to examine more clearly the influence of any contrast effects that might emerge. Each newscast included one of three commercial conditions: A) three high-quality commercials, B) three low-quality commercials or C) no commercials. This resulted in a 2 x 3 factorial design.

After watching the program, the participants were then asked to complete a questionnaire giving their impressions of the news program as a whole, the individual news stories, and the commercials. In order to check the manipulation of commercial quality, commercials were evaluated as a group only rather than as individual ads.

Procedure

Each experimental condition was tested via two exposure sessions. Each exposure session was independent and conducted between 12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. over a two-week period. In each session, an experimenter indicated that the subjects were going to be viewing a portion of a newscast, recorded somewhere in the United States. The subjects were then instructed to observe the program in a relaxed manner as if they were at home. Finally, the subjects were informed that they would be completing an evaluation of the program at its conclusion.

The four stories in the high quality news segment were about a prison breakout, car seizures and impounding, high housing prices, and a participant on the TV series *Survivor*. The high quality newscast originated from a station in the Phoenix market. The four stories included in the low quality newscast were about problems with police and fire radio transmission dependability, the local orchestra schedule, the purchase of a local golf course, and an actor from the TV series *Big Brother*. The low quality news segments were taken from a newscast out of the Davenport, IA/Moline, IL market.

Quality ads were determined by selecting winning commercials from the London International Advertising Awards. Low quality ads were selected from commercials aired on local television in Moline, IL. In the conditions in which commercials were present, no special attention was drawn to the commercials.

After exposure, the participants were given one of two questionnaires, A) a seven-page questionnaire (when commercials were present), which included scales for evaluating the news overall, individual stories, as well as the commercial pod, or B) a six-page questionnaire (when commercials were absent), which included scales for evaluating the program. After receiving the questionnaires, the participants were instructed not to look ahead. They were to fill out each page and not go back to a previous page. Upon completion of the questionnaires, the experimenter collected them, and the participants were allowed to leave.

Program Evaluation

Participants answered the following questions about the program. First, the participants rated the news on a set of 14 unipolar scales for the following characteristics: upsetting, cheerful, entertaining, frightening, humorous, boring, interesting, disturbing, scary, uplifting, sad, amusing, depressing, and informative. The ratings were from 0 (not at all) to 10 (extremely). Second, the participants were asked to rate the overall quality of the newscast based on the question, "Overall, how would you rate the quality of this newscast on a scale of 0-10?" (zero to ten corresponded with low to high respectively). Third, the participants completed an open-ended question, which required them to list the subjects of the four stories that were presented in the newscast. Answers were coded as correct if any of the keywords used in the news story were present.

Next, the participants completed an evaluation of each individual news story. The evaluation consisted of two parts. The first part consisted of five questions. The questions were: "In your opinion, how important was this issue?" "In your opinion, how good was the presentation of this story?" "How likely is it, that an issue such as this, would affect you personally?" "In your opinion, how informative was the story?" and "In your opinion, how worthy of news coverage was this topic?" Each of these questions was evaluated individually using an eleven-point scale ranging from 0 (not at all) to 10 (extremely). The second part consisted of four questions involving a five-point semantic differential scale. These four questions were selected from a set of 17 scales developed by Tannenbaum and Lynch (1960).

They were chosen on the basis of Finn & Hickson's (1986) findings and on their applicability to news programming. For the four questions participants rated whether the news was timid/bold, weak/strong, light/dark, and hard/soft by placing an "X" on a line divided into five equal segments.

Commercial Evaluation

Once the news questions had been completed, participants answered questions about the commercials. First, participants were asked to rate how well they remembered the commercial pod, using an eleven-point scale ranging from 0 (not at all) to 10 (extremely well). Second, they were asked to rate the commercial pod using a set of 15 unipolar scales for the characteristics creative, unlikable, pleasant, depressing, visually appealing, good, imaginative, dull, captivating, informative, well producе, stupid, entertaining, involving, and boring. The ratings ranged from 0 (not at all) to 10 (extremely). Next the participants were asked to indicate their desire to change the channel during the commercial pod, using an eleven-point scale ranging from 0 (not at all) to 10 (very much). Then participants were asked to indicate the quality of the commercial pod using an eleven-point scale ranging from 0 (low) to 10 (high). Finally, the participants were asked to indicate their opinion as to the length of the commercial pod. The scale ranged from one minute to five minutes at half-minute intervals.

Results

Program Treatment Checks

First, the programs were tested for quality. More specifically, we tested whether the programs intended as high quality or low quality were deemed as high or low quality respectively by the participants. While the question directly asking about overall news quality did not reflect a significant difference in participant evaluations, the average evaluation of individual news stories on elements of quality described by Rosenthiel and Gottlieb (1999) did. The question "... how important was this issue?" resulted in participants finding the stories in the high quality newscast to be more important ($\underline{M} = 4.6$) than stories in the low quality newscast($\underline{M} = 3.8$) ($\underline{F}$ (1, 78) = 8.25, $p < .01$). The question "... how good was the presentation of this story?" resulted in higher ratings for the quality newscast (*M* = 5.5) than for the low quality newscast (*M* = 4.6) (*F* (1,78) = 5.73, *p* < .05). Also, the question "... how informative was the story?" resulted in higher evaluations for the high quality newscast (*M* = 5.1) than for the low quality newscast (*M* = 4.4) (*F* (1,78) = 4.34, *p* < .05). Finally, the measure asking "... how worthy of news coverage was this topic?" showed that the stories in high quality condition were more worthy of coverage (*M* = 4.7) than the stories in the low quality condition (*M* = 3.6) (*F* (1, 77) = 16.4, *p* < .001). Therefore, it seems clear that participants did perceive a difference in news quality between the newscasts.

Commercial Treatment Checks

Factor analysis (principal component, varimax rotation) was used to determine which of the 15 eleven-point unipolar interval scale characteristics variables measured similar aspects of commercial quality. Two factors emerged. The adjectives creative, visually appealing, good, imaginative, and well produced were positively loaded with each other. All factors loaded at .82 or higher and accounted for 53.8% of the variance. The ratings of the five positively correlated variables were averaged to obtain a composite measure labeled "commercial production quality." Interitem consistency was high (*alpha* = .97).

A second factor emerged as well. The adjectives dull, stupid, and boring were also positively loaded with each other. All factors loaded at .80 or higher and accounted for 33.3 % of the variance. The ratings of the three positively correlated variables were averaged to obtain a composite measure labeled "commercial irritation," which arguably suggests the commercials were low in quality. Again interitem consistency was high (*alpha* = .89).

An ANOVA was performed on the composite measure "commercial production quality" using the independent variable ad condition. The "commercial production quality" measure varied (*F* (1, 59) = 65.3, *p* < .001) as a main determinant of the quality of the commercial pod. Respondents rated the production of the commercials as was expected with the high quality ad pod rated as significantly higher (*M* = 7.1) than the low quality ad pod (*M* = 2.9).

Further, an ANOVA was also performed on the composite measure "commercial irritation" using the independent variable ad condition. The "commercial irritation" measure varied, (*F* (1, 59) = 31.6, *p* < .001) as a secondary determinant of the quality of the commercial pod. Respondents rated the low-quality commercial condition to be more irritating (*M* = 6.4) than the high quality condition (*M* = 2.8). These two ANOVAs confirm that the manipulation of commercial quality was successful.

Test of Hypotheses

Three variables that seemed to measure information quality components of the newscast were subjected to a confirmatory factor analysis. The variables interesting, informative, and overall quality loaded highly on one factor with all variables loading at .80 or higher. The factor accounted for 68% of the variance and had interitem reliability of *alpha* = .75. A composite variable created from averaging the three measures was labeled "information quality."

Variables that seemed to measure emotional components of a viewer's response to news were tested by a confirmatory factor analysis to confirm that they indeed measured one construct. The factor analysis revealed that the adjectives upsetting, frightening, disturbing, scary, sad, and depressing were positively loaded with each other. This factor explained 69.7% of the variance with all factors loading at .74 or higher. The ratings of the six variables were averaged to obtain a composite measure of "emotions." Consistency was high, alpha = .91.

Variables that seemed to measure the enjoyment of the news were also subjected to a confirmatory factor analysis. These variables, however, measured more than one construct as two factors emerged from the analysis. The first factor involved the adjectives, entertaining, and interesting, which were positively loaded with each other and negatively loaded with the adjective boring. This factor explained 38.6 % of the variance with all factors loading at .73 or higher. The ratings of the two positively correlated variables and the inverse of the negatively correlated variable were averaged to obtain a composite measure of "news enjoyment." Interitem consistency was high at *alpha* = .75. The second factor loaded highly on the variables cheerful and uplifting. This factor was disregarded however due to a low *alpha* of less than .5.

All three of the composite measures were subjected to analysis of variance using news condition and commercial condition as independent variables. Since the analysis of variance for the "emotion" measure only approached significance on the interaction (F (2, 74) = 3.0, p = .054), an analysis of covariance was used with gender as a covariate (see Perry, 2001, who found gender to affect commercial influence on program liking). The dependent variable "emotion" varied significantly, (F (2, 72) = 3.1, p < .05) as an interaction between news condition and commercial condition when gender was controlled for. With regards to high quality news, respondents felt a similarly high amount of negative emotions resulting from the program upon inclusion of high and low-quality commercials (M = 3.3 and M = 3.4 respectively). However, upon the removal of commercials, respondents felt a decrease in negative emotion, with a mean of (M = 2.0). Low quality news, on the other hand, resulted in low negative emotion as a result of the program upon inclusion of high (M = 1.8) and low quality (M = 1.5) commercials. However, upon the removal of commercials, respondents showed an increase in negative emotions (M = 3.1) as a result of watching the news stories as shown in Table 1. Similar tests of "information quality" and "news enjoyment" showed no significant effects based on news or commercial conditions.

Further analysis was performed on the retention level of the stories in the newscast versus the presence of commercials. An analysis of variance was performed using the recall of individual stories as the dependent variable and news condition and ad condition as independent variables. The "recall" varied, (F (2, 78) = 3.4, p < .05) as a main effect of the commercial condition. A Student-Newman-Keuls post hoc analysis showed that respondents remembered fewer of the stories when either high quality or low-quality commercials were present (M = 2.9) compared to when commercials were absent altogether (M = 3.4).

The final test of commercial and news quality influence re-examined Finn & Hickson's (1986) findings using the semantic differential scales. Matching semantic scales for each story were averaged across the four stories viewed. Initial ANOVAs showed main effects based on news quality, but that finding is less meaningful than findings related to advertising quality. Therefore we controlled for news viewing habits using both the number of times per week participants watched the news and the time of day (morning, mid-day, evening, night) that they most often watched as covariates.

The resulting ANCOVAs showed a main effect of commercial quality on the perception of whether the news was "timid/bold" (F (2, 73) = 3.24, p < .05). The analysis revealed there was a contrast effect with low-quality commercials leading to evaluation of the news stories as more "bold" (M = 2.9 on a scale of 1 to 5). When high-quality commercials were shown and when commercials were omitted the news stories were assessed as more "timid" (M = 2.5 for both). A main effect also emerged for news quality (F (1, 73) = 4.35, p < .05) with the high quality news rated as more "bold" (M = 2.8) and low quality news rates as more "timid" (M = 2.5).

The second ANCOVA for the dependent variable "weak/strong" resulted in a main effect only on news quality (F (1, 73) = 4.14, p < .01). The high quality news was rated as more "strong" (M = 2.8) while the low quality news was thought to be "weaker" (M = 2.4). The ANCOVA for the dependent variable "hard/soft" resulted in significant effects based on news condition (F (1, 73) = 7.12, p > .01) with low quality news being rated more "soft" (M = 3.7) than high quality news (M = 3.3).

In the fourth ANCOVA over the dependent ratings of light/dark, by replacing the covariate "frequency of watching news" with the participants' "primary media source for news" (i.e. television, newspapers, internet, other), the commercial condition comes close to repeating the effect it had on the timid/bold ratings, though significance is at a weaker level (F (2,72) = 2.62, p < .10). The low-quality commercials move viewers toward perceiving the news as more dark (M = 2.54) while those who saw no commercials rated the news more toward the light rating (M = 2.22). Perceptions of viewers who saw high-quality commercials fell in the middle at M = 2.34. In this ANCOVA, the main effect of news condition (F (1, 72) = 18.0, p < .001) is still significant with high quality news being perceived as darker (M = 2.6) than low quality news (M = 2.1).

Pre vs. post commercial pod effects on news perception. With the commercial break in the newscast segments falling between the second and third stories in both the high and low quality conditions, it was possible to analyze whether the commercials made a difference in perception of news stories that came before the break vs those that came after the break. A contrast effect would be most likely to show up in news stories shown after the commercials. Therefore, ratings for the stories that appeared before the commercial break were averaged for each of the four semantic differential scales and for one additional question, "How likely is it that this issue such as this would affect you personally?" Five similar composite measures were created for the news stories following the commercial break. Each of these measures was then subjected to analysis of variance. The commercial quality condition was used as the only independent variable since news quality should have no bearing on before and after commercial differences.

None of the pre-commercial news story ratings were influenced by the commercial quality. Responses were significantly different, however, for the post-commercial rating of whether the topics of the news stories would affect them personally ($\underline{F}$ (2, 81) = 3.28, $\underline{p}$ < .05). While no viewers thought that being personally affected was very likely on a scale from zero (0) to ten (10), viewers who saw the low-quality commercials gave higher estimations of their likelihood of being affected ($\underline{M}$ = 2.3) compared to viewers who saw no commercials ($\underline{M}$ = 1.2). The estimates of those who saw high-quality commercials ($\underline{M}$ = 1.6) did not differ significantly.

Discussion

As we analyze the first research question, it is clear that commercial quality influence on newscasts in this study is moderate at best. However, mild support for contrast effects was present. News was perceived to be bolder when shown in combination with low-quality commercials and more timid when shown with high-quality commercials or when no commercials were included. News seems to have also been seen as "darker" in quality with low-quality commercials when contrasted with newscasts lacking commercials. Similarly, an analysis of the perception of only those news stories aired after the commercial break showed that when low-quality commercials were included, the perceived likelihood that the viewer would be affected by the story was greater than when no commercials were shown. The consistency between these three findings, though commercial quality failed to result in other discernable effects, suggests that when the quality of the commercials is considered, low-quality commercials can improve perceptions of the news program in which they are aired

The elaboration likelihood approach to this research was not supported The quality level of the award winning commercials did not subconsciously indicate to viewers that the newscast was of higher or lower quality compared to the other two commercial conditions The newscast was not found to be more enjoyable based on the quality and presence of the commercials, nor did commercial quality and presence influence the reported emotional response to the stories in the news

The hypothesis that newscasts with commercials would be perceived to be higher in entertainment values and news qualities compared to newscasts without commercials was not supported When comparing our results with Finn and Hickson (1986) our findings are similar only for the emotional response to the low quality newscast In the low quality condition, the presence of commercials resulted in less negative emotional response to the program When commercials were removed, the program invoked much higher levels of negative emotion This is similar to Finn and Hickson's participants who responded more positively to the *MacNeil Lehrer News Hour* when it contained commercials Thus, we found only slight support for our hypothesis

On the other hand there is more to contradict the hypothesis When the high quality newscast was shown, responses were in the opposite direction When the news contained commercials, the emotional responses were more negative than when commercials were absent Thus we find that the influence of commercials may be dependent on qualities of the newscast Another negative impact of commercials was in recall of the news stories When commercials were present, recall was lower than when no commercials were included Clearly, the impact of disruptive information (the commercials) is likely to impact memory and recall

Other Findings

Designing a newscast that controls for all variables except quality is likely to be impossible The elements that determine whether a newscast is high or low quality are varied and many Therefore, we avoided hypotheses that predicted variations in perception based upon news quality The findings we attribute to news quality are a bit tenuous since other more specific variations may account for the differences, but they are still worth mentioning

High quality newscasts regularly accounted for heightened perceptions of the newscast on the semantic differential measures High-quality news was perceived to be more "bold," "strong," "hard," and "dark," while low-quality news was more "timid," "weak," "soft," and "light." Even though these differences were found, the newscasts did not result in differing perceptions of news enjoyment or of information quality Differences in the emotional response to news were influenced by news quality, but only as an interaction with commercial presence When either high or low quality commercials were used, respondents showed increased perceptions of negative emotions after viewing high-quality news vs low quality news When no commercials were present, perceptions of emotion in the two news conditions were not significantly different but means were in the opposite directions

Conclusions for Television Journalism

From a journalism standpoint, this research indicates that commercials may make a difference in how news is perceived The fact that local news features local advertisers and that in many instances, these advertisers have produced only low budget, low-quality commercials seems to play to the strength of perceptions of the newscast The newscast will get better reviews from viewers overall because the commercials are poor in quality What has variously been called contrast, competition, or even a distraction effect comes into play when the commercial quality is lower As the viewer makes comparisons between the ad and the adjacent news material, this leads the viewer to perceive stronger characteristics of the newscast Interestingly, the assumption in the viewer is apparently that all content should be expected to show quality since the no-commercial condition and the high quality commercial condition lead to nearly the same perceptions of the newscasts Thus, for the most part even the award winning ads were not significantly different from the absence of commercials

One exception to this seems to have been where the very presence of commercials caused effects regardless of quality. Commercials interrupted information acquisition from news stories, a problem that should be of concern to journalists as they attempt to communicate with their audiences. Furthermore, the presence of commercials influenced emotional evaluation of news. News stories are often emotional in nature provoking sad, disturbing, upsetting, and other emotional responses. Arguably, this may be a perception that a news director would want for the newscast. If emotional response is a goal, then the well run (quality) newscasts may benefit from the presence of commercials. If instead such emotion gets in the way of proper evaluative judgements of news information and leads to negative feelings about the station's newscast, than commercial presence, the very lifeblood of the station, is a detriment to the local news station's image, identity, and journalistic success.

Future research should examine how other characteristics of commercials interact with the newscast. Finn and Hickson's (1986) look at news used commercials that were arousing - some because of humor and some for other unspecified reasons. Bjorna et al. (2001) used the concept of commercial energy levels finding an interaction based on the type of program in which the ads were shown. The concept of energetic commercials should be applied to news. Also, humorous commercials have been studied for their effect on humorous programs but have not been extended to news. Other options would include evaluating the impact of commercials based on the seriousness of the subject matter. Many commercials shown during news are for serious "products." For example, political commercials and those for medicine and health care products seem to be advertised heavily during news programs. Commercial seriousness could, therefore, be studied for its influence. Finally, commercial quality may contrast with perceptions of other types of programming. Perhaps entertainment programs may also be perceived differently based on the low or high quality of the ads contained in the programs. Much could still be studied along these lines.

Table 1

Emotional Perceptions of News as a Function of Newscast Quality and Commercial Quality.

News Quality	Commercial Quality High	Low	None	Total
High	3.31^{Aa}	3.43^{Aa}	2.07^{b}	2.94
Low	1.80^{Ba}	1.46^{Ba}	3.08^{b}	2.12
Total	2.55	2.45	2.58	2.51

Note. Means not sharing lower case superscripts differ at $p < .05$ across commercial quality condition (horizontally). Means not sharing upper case superscripts differ at $p < .05$ across news quality condition (vertically).

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Radio-TV

To Be On TV or To Be a TV Journalist:

Students' and Professionals' Perceptions of the Role of Journalism in Society

By Ron F. Smith and George Bagley[*]

The Jane Pauley Task Force on Mass Communication Education called for schools to reconsider their offerings in broadcast journalism.[1] The report encouraged schools to broaden the educational background of broadcast news students, improve their basic skills and limit enrollment to only the best students, a recommendation that some educators considered "elitist."[2] The Pauley Task Force report was debated at a meeting of AEJMC when it were first released, and its recommendations remain a topic of discussion among faculty and news professionals.

However, one aspect of the report has garnered less attention. When asked about recent broadcast-news graduates he had interviewed for jobs at his station, one news director complained, "The vast majority have no idea what journalism is about." Other news directors said that students seemed to see TV journalism more as an opportunity to be on TV than to practice journalism. He was not alone in this concern. Only 15% of the news directors thought broadcast news majors were adequately prepared in the area of journalism ethics, 18% in the business of broadcast journalism and 3% in mass communication law. This finding probably surprised many journalism educators. When the professors answered the Pauley survey, a majority of them thought their students were well-prepared in ethics, communication law and the business of journalism.

The disagreement between professors and news employers on the intellectual foundations students receive may present two additional questions: Are college courses successful in shaping ethics and attitudes of students? And, might the professional news people and the educators have different expectations for the courses.

Researchers have studied the effectiveness of media ethics course, and many of these studies has less than supportive of these courses. In at least three students, researchers used the Rokeach Value Inventory, which assesses attitudes by asking test-takers to rank 36 attributes in order of how much value they place in them.[3] The list includes items like "peace in the world," "wisdom" and "mature love." Lee and Padgett gave this inventory to students before and after a journalism ethics class and found that "a short-term mass media ethics study could not develop values considered essential for ethical behavior."[4] Two other studies—one with students in Canada and the other in Tennessee—also used the Rokeach Inventory and found that students' values did change, but the nature of the changes in values differed in the two studies.[5] Lee and Padgett suggested these differences were a result of using students with different backgrounds and variations in the courses themselves.

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Of course, in applied programs like broadcast journalism, one would expect that most courses would help students acquire a sense of the ethical and societal functions of journalism. The news directors did not believe they were. This paper will attempt to discover if the news directors are right. Specifically, we will ask:

1. Do the journalistic values of working broadcast journalists differ from those of students planning broadcast news careers?
2. Do the attitudes toward specific ethical issues in journalism differ between working broadcast journalists and students planning broadcast news careers?
3. Do college courses in journalism ethics and law have an impact on students' attitudes toward ethical issues and other journalistic values?
4. Since they have chosen careers in broadcast journalism rather than other areas of radio-television studies, do broadcast-news majors have different attitudes on these issues than broadcast majors who do not plan news careers?

Methods

Several research efforts have explored the values and attitudes of working journalists, some dating back to the 1930s. Perhaps the landmark study in this area was done by John W.C. Johnstone and his colleagues at the University of Illinois and published as *The News People* in 1976. Using Johnstone's research as a starting point, David Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit have produced three extensive studies of working journalists. The most recent, published in 1996, is *The American Journalist in the 1990s.*[6]

Wilhoit and Weaver included a series of questions about ethics and journalist values in their surveys. We decided to use their questions as a basis for comparison between broadcast students and working broadcast professionals. We acknowledge that because the surveys were done a few years apart, some differences in their responses may be the result of history. We would note, however, that the professional values of working journalists remained consistent in Weaver and Wilhoit's surveys in the 1980s and their latest survey. Responses to half the items differed by 1 percentage point or less. Only one role, "to get information to public quickly," changed markedly. Weaver and Wilhoit attributed that change to the advent of new technologies. We believe this level of consistency in professional values of working journalists in the past two decades lends some validity to our use of Weaver and Wilhoit's data as a basis for comparison.

To prepare this part of the questionnaire, we repeated verbatim the wording of the questions on the Weaver-Wilhoit survey. We added questions about the courses students had taken, their intent to work in broadcast journalism, the type of work they expected to do at the beginning of their careers, their expectations for career growth and their salary expectations.

We selected at random from the BEA Directory ten universities and colleges that had programs in broadcast journalism. We asked faculty at those schools if they would administer the forms. Eight initially indicated they would, but two failed to return the questionnaires without explanation. The final pool included both large programs in major universities and smaller programs at private colleges. We received 170 useable surveys.

Work done by researchers at Ohio State University has consistently shown that many students who major in journalism do not pursue careers in the media. To lessen the impact of those students on our findings, we defined "broadcast journalism students" as students who said they were Radio-TV majors and who said they planned to work in broadcast news.

Findings

Role of Journalism: Weaver and Wilhoit gave journalists a list of 12 roles the news media might play in society. We gave the same list to broadcast-news students. On one level, students and professionals were similar. They tended to agree on which values were more important and which were less important. A rank-order test found a fairly strong correlation between the professionals and the students (Pearson r = .785, p = .0018).

However, there are important differences in the responses of news directors and students that might account for some of the criticisms voiced by news directors in the Pauley report. Professionals placed significantly higher importance than students in investigating government claims, avoiding unverified stories, giving the people a voice and being an adversary of government. Student journalists placed greater emphasis than professionals in providing entertainment, getting the widest audience and developing the intellectual and cultural interests of their audiences. (See Table 1.)

We found significant differences in the responses of men and women broadcast-news majors. Men were significantly more likely to place great importance in the functions of providing entertain (38% to 15%), being an adversary to government (24% to 7%) and setting the agenda (27% to 9%). Men also placed higher regard to letting citizens express their views (43% to 20%). (See Table 2.)

Wilhoit and Weaver used factor analysis of the responses they received from professionals to group responses from professionals. They found that the responses fell into four groupings.

Most professional journalists fell into Weaver and Wilhoit's *interpretative-investigative function*. "This approach was a blending of three important roles: investigating government claims, analyzing and interpreting complex problems, and discussing public policies in a timely way." It was a characteristic that seemed to be very important to journalists at news magazines, wire services and daily papers but somewhat less so among TV journalists.

Broadcast students were even less likely to fall into this group. At a statistically significant level, fewer of them than the professionals rated "investigating government claims" as "extremely important." (See Table 3.)

The second most common function among professionals was the *disseminator function*. These journalists saw great importance in "getting information to the public quickly" and "avoiding stories with unverifiable 'facts.'" The students were rated both of those items significantly lower than working broadcast journalists. (See Table 4.)

Adversary function, which consisted of the roles of "being an adversary to government" and "being an adversary to business," was another function that was more common among print journalists (32% of news-magazine journalists and 26% of daily newspaper journalists). But it was less common among professional broadcasters (17% and 9%) and, according to our study, among students (12% and 11%). (See Table 5.)

Weaver and Wilhoit's fourth category was *the populist mobilizer function*. This function included "allow public to express views," "develop cultural and intellectual interests," "provide entertainment" and "set the political agenda." So few working journalists fell into this category that Weaver and Wilhoit dropped it from many of their subsequent statistical studies of professionals. However, many broadcast journalism students considered these roles "extremely important." As a group, they gave significantly higher ratings to three of them than did the pros. (See Table 6.)

When we performed a factor analysis of the student responses, we found that students' responses fell into different groupings than did Wilhoit and Weaver's professionals. We labeled them: serious-minded journalists, activist journalists and entertainment-oriented journalists.

The largest group of students clustered in the *serious-minded journalists* category. They gave great important to discussing national issues (27%), investigating government claims (67%) and developing the intellectual and cultural interests of the public (40%).

The second largest grouping, *entertainment-oriented journalists*, gave high marks to the important of entertaining the public (22%) and drawing the widest possible audience (30%).

The smallest grouping was the *activist journalists* saw it as important that the news media set the political agenda (15%), be the adversary of government (12%) and influence public opinion.

Ethics—Wilhoit and Weaver gave broadcast-news professionals 10 questionable reporting practices and asked them if they thought the practices could be justified. We gave students the same list of practices.

The students in our survey differed significantly from the professionals on half of the questions, often by several percentage points. In some cases they differed by several percentage points. On privacy issues, 34% of working journalists thought it might be justified to name rape victims; only 9% of students agreed. To using personal documents without permission, 45% of pros said they could justify it as compared to 21% of students who said they could. While 90% of professionals approved of some use of hidden microphones and cameras, 75% of students agreed with the practice. Students were less likely to approve of getting employed by a firm to gain inside information (42% to 65%). (See Table 7.)

The students differed even more from working professionals when print and wire service journalists were included. Students differed significantly in eight classifications. (See Table 8.)

Women students differed significantly from men students when asked if badgering witnesses could be justified. They were also less willing to name rape suspects, although the difference was not statistically significant. (See Table 9.)

Effects of ethics courses—In overall comparisons, media ethics courses and media law courses appear to have little impact on students. To questions concerning ethical situations and the roles of journalism, responses of students who said they had taken a course were very similar to those who had not. (See Table 10, 11 and12.) However, factor analyses of students who planned broadcast news careers varied somewhat by whether they had had the course. (See Table 13.)

Before we conclude that the courses are ineffective, we should note two other findings. First, as in Lee and Padgett's study, results varied from school to school. At one of our responding schools, students who had an ethics course differed significantly on five of the role questions. Students who had the course at this school were more interested in being an adversary to government, giving citizens a voice, discussing cultural activities and national politics and appealing to a wide audience. At another school, students were significantly more likely to want to appeal to the widest audience and provide entertainment. Lee and Padgett suggested the differences may be a result of differing sociological characteristics of the universities. We would add that other factors may be what's being taught in specific ethics courses or in the overall programs and/or how well the instructors are teaching these courses. These factors, of course, are beyond the scope of the present study but may be an area worthy of future research.

Differences between News and Non-News Broadcast Majors. Many news directors indicated in the Pauley study that they wondered if broadcast-news majors were more interested in being on TV than in doing journalism. When we compared majors planning news careers with those who did not plan to do news, we found only one statistically significant difference in their attitudes on ethical issues and the importance of various journalistic functions. News majors were more likely to believe using hidden cameras was justified (76% to 63%).

Ethics courses seemed to have more impact on the broadcast students who did not plan news careers. After taking an ethics course, these students were more likely to consider it important that the news media contribute to the cultural life of the community (27% before the course and 45% after) and to entertain (21% to 38%) and less important the media stay away from unverified facts (49% to 27%). After the course, non-news majors were more likely to think the media are sometimes justified in naming rape victims (30% to 11%).

Conclusions

The results of our survey suggest that the news directors are correct when they contend that broadcast-news graduates do not share many of their ethical views or their understandings of the role of journalism in society. On 10 ethical situations, the new graduates differed significantly on half of them. When compared with all working journalists, the broadcast-news students differed significantly on eight. Their differences were strongest in situations that related to privacy.

Broadcast journalism students also do not share an understanding of the role of journalism with the working professionals. They were much more likely than the professionals to believe an important role of journalism is to entertain. They also saw their role as setting the agenda and developing the cultural interests of the community. For their part, news directors were more likely to believe their roles as investigating government claims, getting the information to the public quickly and avoiding unverifiable facts. The importance students gave to entertainment and their relative lack of interest in investigating government claims are probably why some news directors complained that students choose broadcast-news careers so they can be on TV rather than to become journalists.

The gap between students and professionals was evident in the findings in another way. When Weaver and Wilhoit analyzed the responses of working journalists, they found four groupings: the interpretative function, the disseminator function, the adversarial function and the populist mobilizer function. The broadcast-news students did not fit well into those categories. They fell into three groupings: serious-minded journalists, activist journalists and entertainment-oriented journalists. Working journalists may feel at home with students in the serious-minded grouping, but they would probably be concerned about working with graduates in the activist and entertainment-oriented groupings.

The Task Force apparently hopes that adding courses in ethics and law will help bridge these ethical and attitudinal differences. The report's conclusion ended with this challenge:

> Core journalism values will remain the same. In fact, they will be needed more than ever. The premium placed on quality writing is growing, not diminishing. More than ever, there is a demand for accuracy, fairness, objectivity, balance, "gutsy" news judgment and a clear sense of ethics.

Earlier research on the impact of ethics courses has looked at whether the students' values change in rather broad terms like importance of family and security. The professionals' probably are hoping for more specific changes, namely, that the students adapt professional values similar to theirs. Our research did not find that ethics courses in general achieved that goal. However, at some universities, ethics courses did make significant differences. Students who took the ethics class at those universities responded differently from their fellow students who did not take the course and the students who took the course were more similar to the news directors.

Our research therefore raises questions about the nature of college media ethics courses. Do the goals of these classes differ among instructors and universities? Previous research has used tests that look for changes in attitudes toward larger life issues. Should the classes be aimed at changing the students' overall value structure or at more specific professional interests? We hope further research will look at these questions.

In conclusion, our findings support the news directors' perceptions that students' values are much different than those of working journalists, particularly in the role of entertainment as a journalistic value. We believe broadcast-news educators may want to consider the news directors' concerns and decide if their students may need more background in the role of journalism in society.

TABLE 1

Importance Given to Journalistic Functions By Broadcast Journalism Students and Working Journalists

	Percentage Who Say Function Is Extremely Important	
Journalistic function	Television Journalism Professionals[a]	Television Journalism Students[b]
Getting information to public quickly	80	67*
Investigating official claims	62	48*
Avoiding unverifiable facts	49	31*
Allow public to express views	39	27
Analyzing complex problems	37	45
Discussing national policy	26	27
Develop cultural interests	18	40**
Adversary of officials	17	12
Adversary of business	9	11
Entertainment	7	22**
Set the political agenda	4	15**

[a] Data taken from Weaver and Wilhoit, *The American Journalist in the 1990s*, 1996.

[b]. Survey taken Fall 2000.

* <.05, ** <.01

TABLE 2
Importance Assigned to News Media Roles By Men and Women Broadcast Journalism Students

	Percentage Saying Extremely Important	
	Men	Women
Get information to public quickly	71	65
Investigate government claims	52	47
Avoid stories with unverified content	38	28
Provide analysis of complex problems	43	47
Let people express views	43	20*
Discuss national policy	29	26
Serve as adversary of government	24	7*
Concentrate on widest audience	38	26
Develop intellectual/cultural interests	43	39
Provide entertainment	38	15*
Set the political agenda	27	9*

* < 05

TABLE 3
The Interpretative Function

Journalistic function	Percentage Who Say Function Is Extremely Important: Television Journalism Professionals[a]	Television Journalism Students[b]
Investigating official claims	62	48*
Analyzing complex problems	37	45
Discussing national policy	26	27

[a] Data taken from Weaver and Wilhoit, *The American Journalist in the 1990s*, 1996.
[b] Survey taken Fall 2000.
* < 05

TABLE 4
The Disseminator Function

Journalistic function	Percentage Who Say Function Is Extremely Important: Television Journalism Professionals	Television Journalism Students
Getting information to public quickly	80	67*
Avoiding unverifiable facts	49	31*

* < 05

TABLE 5
The Adversarial Function

Journalistic function	Percentage Who Say Function Is Extremely Important: Television Journalism Professionals[a]	Percentage Who Say Function Is Extremely Important: Television Journalism Students[b]
Adversary of officials	17	12
Adversary of business	9	11

[a] Data taken from Weaver and Wilhoit, *The American Journalist in the 1990s*, 1996.
[b] Survey taken Fall 2000

TABLE 6
The Populist Mobilizer Function

Journalistic function	Percentage Who Say Function Is Extremely Important: Television Journalism Professionals[a]	Percentage Who Say Function Is Extremely Important: Television Journalism Students[b]
Allow public to express views	39	27
Develop cultural interests	18	40**
Entertainment	7	22**
Set the political agenda	4	15**

[a] Data taken from Weaver and Wilhoit, *The American Journalist in the 1990s*, 1996.
[b] Survey taken Fall 2000
* < 05, ** < .01

TABLE 7

Broadcast Journalism Students and Working Journalists Acceptance of Various Reporting Practices

	Percentage Saying May Be Justified	
Reporting practice	Television Journalism Professionals[a]	Television Journalism Students[b]
Paying people for confidential information	31	25
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization or permission	77	24*
Claiming to be somebody else to get information	31	22
Agreeing to protect confidentiality of a source and not doing so	5	7.5
Badgering unwilling informants to get a story	46	34.3
Making use of personal documents such as letters and photographs without permission	45	21*
Getting employed in a firm or organization to gain inside information	65	42*
Using hidden microphones or cameras	90	75*
Using re-creations or dramatizations of news by actors	42	43
Disclosing the names of rape victims	34	9*

[a] Data taken from Weaver and Wilhoit, *The American Journalist in the 1990s*, 1996.

[b] Survey taken Fall 2000

* <.01

TABLE 8
Importance Assigned to News Media Roles By All Journalists and Broadcast Journalism Students

	Percentage Saying Extremely Important	
	Journalism Professionals[a]	Television Journalism Students[b]
Get information to public quickly	69	67
Investigate government claims	67	48**
Avoid stories with unverified content	49	31**
Provide analysis of complex problems	48	45
Let people express views	48	27***
Discuss national policy	39	27*
Serve as adversary of government	21	12
Concentrate on widest audience	20	30*
Develop intellectual/cultural interests	18	40***
Provide entertainment	14	22*
Serve as adversary of business	14	11
Set the political agenda	5	15***

[a] Data taken from Weaver and Wilhoit, *The American Journalist in the 1990s*, 1996.

[b] Survey taken Fall 2000.

* <.05, ** p < .01, ***p<.001

TABLE 9
Men and Women Broadcast Journalism Students' Acceptance of Various Reporting Practices

	Percentage Saying May Be Justified	
Reporting practice	Men	Women
Paying people for confidential information	33	30
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization or permission	33	20
Claiming to be somebody else to get information	19	24
Agreeing to protect confidentiality of a source and not doing so	4	14
Badgering unwilling informants to get a story	43	30*
Making use of personal documents such as letters and photographs without permission	19	22
Getting employed in a firm or organization to gain inside information	33	46
Using hidden microphones or cameras	71	76
Using re-creations or dramatizations of news by actors	29	40
Disclosing the names of rape victims	19	4

[a] Data taken from Weaver and Wilhoit, *The American Journalist in the 1990s*, 1996.

[b]. Survey taken Fall 2000

* < 01

TABLE 10
Ethical Issues:
Broadcast News Majors and Ethics Courses

	Percentage Who Say Function Is Extremely Important	
Reporting practice	Had Ethics Course	No Ethics Course
Investigating official claims	47	50
Analyzing complex problems	53	39
Discussing national policy	27	29
Getting information to public quickly	70	70
Avoiding unverifiable facts	20	20
Adversary of officials	7	16
Allow public to express views	27	27
Develop cultural interests	43	38
Entertainment	27	19
Set the political agenda	10	19
Getting information to public quickly	70	65
Avoiding unverifiable facts	20	41*
Getting information to public quickly	70	65

* $p < .05$

TABLE 11
Importance of Various Journalistic Functions: Broadcast Journalism Students And Ethics Courses

	Percentage Who Say Function Is Extremely Important	
Reporting practice	Had Ethics Course	No Ethics Course
Investigating official claims	47	50
Analyzing complex problems	53	39
Discussing national policy	27	29
Getting information to public quickly	70	70
Avoiding unverifiable facts	20	20
Adversary of officials	7	16
Allow public to express views	27	27
Develop cultural interests	43	38
Entertainment	27	19
Set the political agenda	10	19
Getting information to public quickly	70	65
Avoiding unverifiable facts	20	41*
Getting information to public quickly	70	65

* $p < .05$

TABLE 12
Ethical Issues:
Broadcast Journalism Students and Law Courses

	Percentage Saying May Be Justified	
Reporting practice	Had Law Course	No Law Course
Paying people for confidential information	30	35
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization or permission	17	35*
Claiming to be somebody else to get information	20	27
Agreeing to protect confidentiality of a source and not doing so	8	8
Badgering unwilling informants to get a story	33	39
Making use of personal documents such as letters and photographs without permission	23	19
Getting employed in a firm or organization to gain inside information	30	50
Using hidden microphones or cameras	70	81
Using re-creations or dramatizations of news by actors	35	54
Disclosing the names of rape victims	13	4

$p < .01$

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Table 13. Groupings of student responses		
	Had ethics course	**No ethics course**
Largest grouping	To be adversary of government To set the agenda To influence public opinion	To discuss national policies To investigate government claims To develop cultural interests
Second largest	To analyze complex issues To discuss national policy	To set agenda To influence public opinion To give voice to citizens
Third Largest	To entertain To develop cultural interests	To analyze complex issues To get the news out quickly To stay away from unsubstantiated claims
Fourth largest	To appeal to the widest audience	To entertain To appeal to the widest audience

Endnotes

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[1] *Tomorrow's Broadcast Journalists. A report and recommendations from the Jane Pauley Task Force on Mass Communication Education*, originally published September 1996 by the Society of Professional Journalists. The report is available on the SPJ's Web site. www.spj.org All materials were taken from the online version. Paul Davis and Dhyana Ziegler were the authors of the task force report

[2] A transcript of a panel discussion at AEJMC Convention in Chicago in 1997 is available on the SPJ Web site.

[3] The inventory was developed by Milton Rokeach in his book, *The Nature of Human Values*. New York: Free Press. 1973. The inventory is used in several contexts including career and relationship counseling.

[4] Byung Lee and George Padgett. "Evaluating the Effectiveness of a Mass Media Ethics Course." *Journalism Educator*. Summer 2000. p. 37.

[5] Surlin. S. H. "Value System Changes as a Result of Media Ethics Courses." *Journalism Quarterly*. 1987. pp. 564-568. and Jay Black et al. "Effects of a Media Ethics Course on Student Values: A Replication and Expansion." paper presented to the national convention of the Association for Education in Mass Communication and Journalism. Montreal. 1992. Surlin used Canadian students: Black students at University of Alabama.

[6] David Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit. *The American Journalist in the 1990s: U.S. News People at the End of an Era*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. 1996.

[7] Weaver and Wilhoit. p. 136.

Radio-TV

Network Television Coverage of the 1980 and 1984 Olympic Boycotts: A Content Analysis of the Evening News on ABC, CBS and NBC

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Network Television Coverage of the 1980 and 1984 Olympic Boycotts: A Content Analysis of the Evening News on ABC, CBS and NBC

ABSTRACT

The United States and the Soviet Union led boycotts tarnishing the 1980 and 1984 Summer Olympics. This study examined how the ABC, CBS and NBC evening news programs covered the boycotts. The press nationalism model holds that media follow the "official" government line in reporting international affairs. Based on abstracts from the Vanderbilt University television archives, this content analysis found evidence to support the hypothesis that press nationalism influenced coverage of the boycotts.

Introduction

The Soviet Union and the United States were the world's two dominant military powers for more than 40 years. Because of that, the diplomatic relationship between the two nations ebbed and flowed from the end of World War II through 1991, when the USSR ceased to exist. Even during those times when the relationship was not overtly hostile, both nations never forgot who the enemy was.

That uneasy association naturally affected the arena of sports, and was especially evident during the quadrennial Olympic Games. The Soviet and American governments relished the success that their athletes enjoyed at the Olympics, especially if it came at the expense of the other side.

Athletes from the Soviet Union and the United States competed against each other at the Olympics for the first time in 1952, when the USSR made its Olympic debut.[1] Their head-to-head battles ended in 1988, the last Games held before the Soviet Union collapsed. They did not compete, however, at every Olympic Games during that period. The United States led a boycott of the 1980 Summer Games in Moscow to protest the Soviet invasion in December, 1979, of Afghanistan.[2] Four years later, the Soviets responded, leading an Eastern bloc boycott of the Summer Games in Los Angeles.[3]

This content analysis examined American broadcast media coverage of the two boycotted Games. More specifically, it looked at how the American Broadcasting Company (ABC), the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS), and the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) dealt with the boycotts during their respective national evening news programs.

The American media are able to gather and report news free of direct governmental pressure. Connected to this freedom is the recognition that the media can (and are supposed to) be a "watchdog" over government, and not a "lapdog" of government. Mieklejohn (cited in McManus,

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[1] Before the Revolution, 'Russia' competed in the 1908 and 1912 Olympic Games.

[2] Approximately 60 nations joined the Americans and stayed away from Moscow.

[3] Romania and Yugoslavia chose to attend the Los Angeles Games.

1997) notes that the "watchdog" role ascribed to news gathering justifies the special protections given to the media in the First Amendment (p. 297).

Being a "watchdog" does not mean that the media will always be critical of the government. But it does mean that the media should not stand by and let the government dictate the discourse appearing in the newspaper and on the radio and television. Independence allows the media to seek out and report a number of opinions, regardless of whether those opinions are favorable or unfavorable of the administration's policies. At the same time, Jannowitz (cited in Hertog, 2000) notes that journalism's professional norms dictate that reporters ought to be critical and objective when covering important issues (p. 613). An examination of whether or not the government controlled the discussion about the American and Soviet boycotts was one of the critical purposes to this study.

The author employed the Vanderbilt University television abstracts in this study. The abstracts provided a brief sketch of each story that the three networks disseminated regarding the Olympic boycotts. This information included who reported the story, what the story was about, and who, if anyone, was quoted. These abstracts could be accessed on-line through the Vanderbilt University Television Archive web site (http://tvnews.vanderbilt.edu).

Literature Review

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has tried to keep international politics out of the Olympic Games. Its efforts have not been successful. Espy (1979) argues that some of the reasons for this failure are obvious. First, every athlete who competes in the Olympic Games does so not as an individual, but instead as a citizen of his or her country (p. 163). Espy also asserts that the structure of the Games, which is built around the "nation-state," contributes to the political atmosphere surrounding each Olympics (p. 171).

Television has fueled the political fire. Proponents of television's involvement with the Olympics correctly point out that the medium has helped showcase the "beauty of sport" and provided the IOC with an enormous financial windfall (International Olympic Committee, 1994, 331). Of course, those dollars are coming from the American television networks, which Barnett (1990) says are turning the Games into "an orgy of telegenic profiteering" because of their money and influence (p.131). The tremendous amount of money paid by the networks to ensure exclusive broadcast rights pressures producers and announcers to craft and deliver a "show" that millions of people will watch. An easy way to do that is to provide a plot suggesting the Olympics are a "battle of us versus them." The "us" is the U.S.; the "them" can be whomever is identified as the "enemy." This appeal to patriotism and nationalism does not sit well with some critics. Nixon (1988, in Segrave and Chu) asserts that the invocation of the red, white and blue is not genuine, but rather an effort aimed at guaranteeing the network's financial investment shows a profit (p. 245).

However much the IOC might dislike television's zeal for making money, there doesn't appear to be much the organization can do about it. Real (1996) points out that television revenues overtook ticket sales as the principal source of IOC income almost 30 years ago (p. 4-5). This trend shows no signs of changing. The IOC, in other words, isn't likely to bite the hand that feeds.

In summation, the values and goals of the American television networks are not the same as the IOC's. The networks discuss winners and losers, while the IOC promotes mutual respect among athletes (Lucas, 1992, p. 4). The networks praise the establishment of new records, while the IOC fights to uphold the idea that athletes should participate in the Olympic Games "solely for pleasure [and] without material gain of any kind" (Stark, 1988 in Segrave and Chu, p. 306).

There are also domestic political pressures that influence how American television networks cover international events. The concept of press nationalism holds that the media will adopt the official government line in their reporting of international affairs. Borrowing from Berry (1990), who examined *New York Times* reporting of foreign affairs, we can envision the foreign policy aims of any U.S. administration during periods of crisis as having three cycles. They are formation, execution and outcome. Berry argues that American news organizations will not criticize the President's goals during the first two stages (p. xiii), and the administration should not worry about manipulating media coverage during these times. He adds that media criticism also will be muted during the final stage if America's policy aims are proving successful. However, the situation will be different if the policy is heading toward failure. Berry asserts that journalists "do not want a failing policy to continue," and will label a "failure as a failure" (p. xiv).

Berry used the Bay of Pigs crisis with Cuba to demonstrate his hypothesis. Berry argued that the *Times* consistently followed President Kennedy's foreign policy initiative during the formation and execution stages, but broke with Kennedy once it became apparent that the Bay of Pigs strategy was doomed. Berry went on to say that the administration then attempted to manipulate the media so as to regain favorable coverage. Berry concluded that those efforts failed "as badly as the Cuban policy" (p. 1).

Nokes (1990) did not employ the Berry typology, but still argued forcefully that the Reagan administration successfully manipulated the Associated Press' coverage of Libya and its leader, Mohammar Qadhafi. Nokes reviewed reports disseminated by the AP during 1981, a year in which the United States repeatedly linked Libya to terrorist activities, concluding that "hardly a week went by without a major story critical of Qadhafi that originated with the administration" (p. 37). Nokes added that because of the "administration's prodding" the media kept Libya and Qadhafi in the spotlight when they really didn't deserve to be (p. 36). He also warned that this was not an isolated example.

> "More often than not, the President and his administration can determine when something becomes news, and how long it stays in the news. They can do this simply by giving an issue attention or not giving it attention" (p. 33).

Seib (1997) provided evidence that the American media also stood by some 10 years later and let the Bush administration influence coverage of the Persian Gulf war. During the buildup to the military conflict "antiwar voices were seldom heard" in media reports, Seib noted (p. 53). Once the fighting started, the administration's viewpoint of the war assumed an even more dominant status. Returning to Berry's hypothesis, this perhaps should not have been surprising because the U.S.-led military effort was extremely successful at getting Saddam Hussein's troops out of Kuwait, thus completing its mission. Lawrence Grossman, the former President of NBC News, writes:

> "The official, sanitized, upbeat version of the war dominated American television screens and neither the public nor the press, which should have known better, was aware that anything was missing at the time" (Grossman, 1997 in Seib, p. 55).

But what about during those times when there is no perceived imminent threat to the United States? Some studies suggest that American media during such periods are even more willing to report stories consistent with the "official line" of the administration. Yu and Riffe (1989) found evidence that America's leading newsmagazines mirrored U.S. foreign policy toward China in their coverage of Communist leader Mao Tse-tung and opposition leader Chiang Kai-shek. Over time, the news magazines "portrayed the two Chinese leaders from a viewpoint consistent with U.S. policy" toward China (p. 919). However, Yu and Riffe noted that the news magazines also seemed to provide more "objective" coverage of the two men, perhaps because the American media had greater access to China.

Dickson (1992) demonstrated that the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post,* perhaps America's two most influential newspapers, allowed the Reagan administration to dominate the discourse about U.S. policy toward Nicaragua during the mid-1980s. Dickson reported that almost one-half of the sources cited in both papers were administration officials, while representatives of the Contras were rarely heard.

Entman (1990) provided another example of the Reagan administration's ability to influence news coverage by reviewing how leading figures within the administration were able to "frame" the reporting of the shooting down of a Korean Air Lines plane by the Soviet Union and the shooting down of an Iran Air jet by the United States. Entman noted that several prominent American news organizations allowed the administration to influence the "moral discourse," which suggested that the Soviet government willingly shot down the KAL plane, while the Iran Air incident was a tragic mistake with absolutely no link to the U.S. government (p. 14).

Many of these examples demonstrate that the most important goal of American foreign policy during the Cold War was the attempt at stopping the spread of communism. Herman and Chomsky (1988) suggest these efforts often came to symbolize a sporting contest "with gains and losses allocated to contesting sides" (p. 30-31). Herman and Chomsky indicate that the media contributed to this 'game' by "rooting for our side," which, the authors claim, became "an entirely legitimate news practice" (p. 30-31).

Kriesberg (1946) employed a content analysis of *New York Times'* coverage of the Soviet Union from 1917 through 1946. He found that news unfavorable to the Soviets received far more attention than did news that was favorable (p. 540). Kriesberg pointed out that themes suggesting that Soviet leaders were either "immoral," "unreasonable," or otherwise lacking the kind of virtues connected with America's leaders could have the effect of discrediting those men in the minds of the paper's readers (p. 543-544). Positive portrayals of the USSR appeared more often during those periods when the two nations shared similar interests (e.g. defeating Germany in World War II). However, Kriesberg reported:

> "When statements attributing characteristics to the Soviet Union seem favorable, they are usually equivocal; these qualities seem virtuous only because in the context used their presence furthers American interests" (p. 543).

The often strained relations between the United States and the Soviet Union had effects that went far beyond the diplomatic and military realms. As mentioned, the two also were the world's athletic superpowers, guaranteeing that their "sporting" competitions would be closely scrutinized by the media. That athletic "rivalry" appeared to certainly be on the minds of the American journalists who covered the Olympic Games.

Schillinger and Jenswold (1987) showed that a "national bias" existed in American press coverage of the Olympic Games. They found that the *Washington Post,* when compared to *Pravda,* the one-time mouthpiece of the Communist Party in the USSR, was more "nationalistic" and "more partisan" in its coverage of three consecutive Summer Games: 1976, Montreal; 1980, Moscow; and, 1984, Los Angeles.

That "partisan" attitude remained extant during the 1992 Winter Games, which were staged a few weeks *after* the USSR collapsed. Riggs, Eastman and Golobic (1992) reviewed the commentary delivered by the announcers and analysts for CBS and Turner Network Television (TNT) during the Games from Albertville, France. They found that the Unified Team, the nations which comprised the Commonwealth of Independent States, was "portrayed nationalistically only 53 percent of the time, but almost uniformly hostilely" (p. 261-262). Moreover, the commentary suggested that the Soviet/Unified Team was a "weak" country, a "quashed national enemy" (p. 264).

Method

It is not a stretch to call the American television networks the elites of the broadcast medium. Cable television and the advent of new media technologies are eating away at the "audience share" that the networks once had, but the networks remain a dominant news and entertainment source.

Justification for examining television coverage stems from the recognition that television has supplanted the newspaper as the primary source that Americans turn to for news. The 1980 and 1984

Summer Olympic competitions offer an opportunity to examine whether the network news programs allowed American foreign policy interests to influence their coverage.

As mentioned, the author employed the Vanderbilt University television abstracts in this study. The author chose to code a census of all stories that dealt with the respective boycotts. The author recognized that there would be periods of intense media coverage immediately following the boycott announcement and during the Games themselves, but also periods where the media would largely ignore the story. In other words, the Olympics would not have been covered consistently and thus the story count was not expected to be high.

Detailed information about the census for the 1980 and 1984 Games follows:

Moscow, 1980

President Jimmy Carter announced on March 21, 1980 that the United States would not attend the Moscow Games. Carter could have reversed his decision at any time between that day and late May, which was the official deadline for all nations to accept their invitation to participate in the Games. But it was obvious that unless the Soviets removed their military from Afghanistan, which the president argued prompted the American boycott, Carter's position would not change.

The author examined a census of all stories that dealt with the Olympic Games from March 21 through August 4, which was the day after the Moscow Games concluded.[4] The selected dates are relevant because the "official" U.S. position about the Moscow Olympics should have changed once Carter declared that American athletes would not attend the Games. From March 21 forward, it is anticipated that the American government chose to continually discredit the integrity of Moscow as an Olympic city, the Soviet Olympic team, and the success Soviet athletes were likely to enjoy minus American competition. At the same time, the American government was pushing for an alternate site for the Games, more nations to join the boycott, or a separate athletic competition. The efforts to undermine Moscow and the Soviet team should have continued through the conclusion of the Games. This reasoning leads to hypotheses 1 and 2:

> H1: Prior to and during the 1980 Summer Olympic Games in Moscow, ABC, CBS and NBC tended to discredit the anticipated and actual achievements of Soviet athletes because the kind of athletic competition that the U.S. would have provided was missing.

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[4] The keywords used to discover the stories were: *Moscow and Olympics*, *Soviet Union and Olympics* and *Olympics and Boycott*.

> H2: Prior to and during the 1980 Summer Olympic Games in Moscow, ABC, CBS and NBC did not view American athletes as victims of their government's decision to boycott the Games. Instead, the networks chose to adopt the "official" government line that the Americans' absence was justified because the Soviets had violated international law by invading Afghanistan.

Los Angeles, 1984

The Soviets based their decision to boycott the 1984 Summer Games in Los Angeles on concerns about the safety of their athletes. The official announcement that they would not attend came on May 8, 1984.

That date began this study's examination of American network television coverage of the 1984 Games. Once again, a census of all stories that discussed the boycott were coded.[5] It is anticipated that the American government repeatedly criticized the reasons the Soviets gave for boycotting the Games. Holding to the theory of press nationalism, it is also anticipated that the American television networks acted the same way. CBS, NBC and ABC (which held the broadcast rights to the Games) likely framed the boycott as groundless and as an action that unfairly prevented Soviet athletes from participating in the Olympic Games. This reasoning leads to hypotheses 3 and 4.

> H3: Prior to and during the 1984 Summer Games in Los Angeles, ABC, CBS and NBC chose to not discredit the anticipated and actual achievements of American athletes even though the kind of athletic competition that the Soviets would have provided was missing.
>
> H4. Prior to and during the 1984 Summer Games in Los Angeles, ABC, CBS and NBC viewed Soviet athletes as victims of their government's unjustified decision to boycott the Games.

There were eight coded categories in this study. A brief description of each is listed here. A more comprehensive look at the categories can be found in Appendix B.

1. Network: The three over-the-air networks (ABC, CBS, NBC) were examined.

2. Date: This category reflected the year in which the story appeared on the evening news.

3. Presenter: Four options existed here. First, an anchor read the story in-studio. Second, an anchor provided a lengthy lead-in to a reporter's package. Third, a correspondent was the primary information disseminator. Fourth, the presenter could not be determined from the information provided on the abstract.

4. Position in Lineup: This category addressed where the coded selection appeared in comparison to all the other topics in the lineup.

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[5] The keywords used to discover the stories were: *Soviet Union and Olympics* ,*Olympics and Boycott* and *Los Angeles and Olympics*.

5. Number of Topics in Lineup: This category addressed the total number of topics in the lineup.

6. Approximate Total Number of Seconds Devoted to Story: This figure was calculated by subtracting the ending time of the story from the beginning time, then converting that figure into seconds.

7. Primary Focus of a Story: This was the "what" of the story.

8. Primary Subject in Story: This was the "who" of the story.

The author acted as the only coder in this study. Intercoder reliability was assessed prior to the commencement of coding. A graduate student at a medium-size Midwestern university, the author, and a graduate of a large Midwestern university who has never attended graduate school served as coders during this process. Intercoder reliability (see Appendix A) for this study, (Stempel and Westley, 1989, p. 133) based on percentage of agreement, ranged from a low of 78.4% for Primary Subject to 80.1% for Primary Focus to 91.75% for Seconds Devoted to Story to 96.7% for Presenter to 98.35% for Total Topics in Lineup to 100% for Network, Year and Topic Position in Lineup, yielding an overall percentage of agreement of 93.16%.

Results

Overall, 459 stories (1980: 223; 1984: 236) appeared on the three networks in the two coded periods. (See Table 1 for a complete review of all coding results.) ABC delivered the highest story count in 1980 (ABC: 86, CBS: 76, NBC 61) and 1984 (ABC: 84, CBS: 75, NBC: 77). However, the mean position of ABC's stories were lower than its two competitors in 1980 (ABC: 7.88, CBS: 7.04, NBC: 6.69) and 1984 (ABC: 7.61, CBS: 6.76, NBC: 6.55).

The U.S.-led boycott was the one story most frequently discussed by all three networks in 1980. NBC devoted more than 50% of its Olympic stories to the issue (31 of 61 stories). CBS also focused heavily on the boycott (33 of 76 stories, 43%). ABC provided the least amount of boycott-related coverage (26 of 86 stories, 31%). The Soviet-led boycott was the issue the networks covered most frequently in 1984. Once again, NBC dedicated the highest percentage of stories (31 of 77 stories, 40%) to the topic, when compared to ABC (31 of 84, 37%) and CBS (24 of 75, 32%).

This study also showed network bias against the Soviet Union, its politicians, and athletes. American politicians (1980: 22, 1984: 19) were the subject in many more stories than their Soviet counterparts (1980: 6, 1984: 7) in 1980 and 1984. Soviet athletes also were largely neglected by the three networks. Rarely were they the focus (1980: 3, 1984: 0) or subject (1980: 5, 1984: 3) of a story. By contrast, American athletes continually received network coverage as the focus (1980: 3, 1984: 52) and/or subject (1980: 12, 1984: 59). Finally, Soviet citizens made scarce appearances on American television (1980: 2, 1984: 4). By contrast, American citizens (1980: 13, 1984: 28) were given ample opportunity to discuss the boycotts and other issues connected to the Olympic Games.

At this point, we examine whether or not the results supported the hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1 was supported: The networks did discredit the anticipated and actual achievements of Soviet athletes during the 1980 Moscow Games. They did it by in essence acting as if the Soviet Olympic team didn't exist (see Table 2).

The USSR won more gold (80) and overall (195) medals than any other country during the Summer Games. But in the months leading up to and then during the Games themselves a Soviet athlete or team was the focus of a network story only three times. ABC aired all three stories, meaning CBS and NBC ignored the Soviet Olympic team. Both networks had opportunities to do just the opposite: CBS carried 76 stories during the coded period; NBC delivered 61. ABC, CBS and NBC reported some of the results coming out of Moscow Olympics, despite the absence of the Americans and many of their allies. A total of 21 stories dealing with medal winners aired. None of these had to do with Soviet athletes.

While ABC deserves credit for providing some coverage of the Soviet team, one should not forget that it aired 86 stories about the 1980 Summer Games. That means just 3.4% of ABC's stories highlighted Soviet Olympians. The approximate total time for the three stories was 65 seconds. ABC devoted about 5760 seconds, or 1.6 hours, to the Summer Games; thus it focused on Soviet Olympians 1.1% of the time.

Soviet athletes were not seen by American television viewers. They were not heard from either. The networks might defend this practice by arguing that most Soviet athletes did not speak English; thus allowing a translator to speak for them could be confusing to the viewer. This position appears specious because translation is accepted and widely used by all networks. CBS again completely ignored Soviet Olympians, never once making them the subject of a story. ABC was only slightly more generous, identifying a Soviet athlete as the subject of two of 41 stories (4.9%). NBC was not much better. It made a Soviet Olympian the subject of three of 37 stories (8.1%).

Hypothesis 2 was supported. There were 90 coded stories that discussed the American boycott. Of those, the primary subject was identified in 46 (see Table 3). An American politician (almost always President Carter) was the subject in 14 of those 46 (30.4%), meaning he appeared in more stories than any other potential subject. Individuals or groups which opposed the U.S. action had opportunities to present their case to the American people. The United States Olympic team and the International Olympic Committee were coded as primary subjects in 15 combined stories. However, none of these individuals carried the prestige or power that President Carter did. At the same time, the number of stories in which the president was the primary subject was given more prominence by the networks; they appeared earlier in the newscast. More frequent appearances by the president with those appearances occurring early in the newscast suggests that the Carter administration was allowed to control the discourse about the U.S. boycott. No Soviet politician was identified as a primary subject, ensuring that America's political enemy had no chance to criticize Carter's efforts.

Hypothesis 3 was supported. Frequency of stories and seconds allotted to stories were the criteria used to demonstrate how the Soviet Olympic team was "ignored" in 1980. The author employed the same criteria to determine how much coverage was given to the 1984 U.S. Olympic team (see Table 4).

American athletes (both as individuals and/or as part of the U.S. team) were the primary focus in 52 stories (ABC: 17; CBS: 12; NBC: 23) and the primary subject in 59 stories (ABC: 20; CBS:14; NBC: 25). Almost 14,000 seconds (or more than 3.75 hours) were devoted to these stories, which included almost daily reports about the medals American athletes were winning and numerous profiles about certain individuals. These results and feature stories were rarely given prominence; they almost always appeared close to or at the end of a newscast. Nevertheless, they were being disseminated to the public. In 1980, these kinds of stories were missing from the newscasts.

It was surprising that NBC carried more stories (48) about the U.S. team than ABC (37), recognizing that ABC held the broadcast rights to the Los Angeles Games. The author offers two potential explanations for this finding. One, ABC was devoting a tremendous amount of resources to the Games. Perhaps ABC wanted to demonstrate that while the Games were going on it was not neglecting its responsibilities of reporting the "news" from around the world. Filling a national newscast with stories about U.S. Olympians, whom already were or soon would be prominently displayed during Olympic coverage, might have left the network open for criticism that it was abandoning its commitment to news and overdoing its commitment to sports. A second possible explanation stems from the fact that NBC was about to become the broadcast home to several upcoming Olympic Games. It may have viewed the Los Angeles Games as a means of demonstrating to the United States and International Olympic Committees that it was prepared to meet this challenge.

Hypothesis 4 also was supported. Once again in 1984, Soviet politicians were not given frequent or prominent speaking positions that could have been used to justify their decision to skip the Summer Games (see Table 5). On only four occasions (ABC: 1, CBS: 2, NBC: 1) were Soviet politicians coded as the primary subject of a story focusing on the Soviet boycott. A total of 86 stories dealt with this topic, meaning that a Soviet politician was able to defend his government less than five percent of the time (4.7%). The mean position for these and the other three stories coded with a Soviet politician as the primary subject did not suggest prominence (ABC: 8.0, CBS: 6.0, NBC: 7.67). Soviet Olympic officials also were the primary subject just four times in stories discussing the USSR boycott.

American politicians (most often President Reagan) were given more opportunities to speak about the Soviet boycott (ABC: 2, CBS: 4, NBC: 5). Their comments about this topic and all others connected to the 1984 Summer Games were delivered early in the newscast as evidenced by mean position in lineup (ABC: 3.0, CBS: 2.67, NBC: 1.83), which is an important measure of prominence.

The networks piled on the criticism of the Soviets. American Olympic officials were given eight opportunities to defend the security and overall preparations for the Games. International Olympic Committee officials, who wanted to broker a deal that would have paved the way for Soviet participation in Los Angeles, were coded as the primary subject four times. And American citizens, usually residents of Los Angeles, who couldn't be blamed for having a case of "Olympic Fever," spoke about the Soviet boycott nine times.

Discussion/Conclusion

This study sought to examine how ABC, CBS and NBC covered the 1980 and 1984 Summer Olympic Games, which were hamstrung by boycotts led by the United States and the Soviet Union. It demonstrated that the networks' evening news programs essentially ignored the success that Soviet athletes enjoyed at the 1980 Moscow Games, where they won more gold and total medals than any other country. It also found evidence that the networks celebrated the equally impressive results that American athletes turned in at the 1984 Los Angeles Games. Finally, it found support for the hypothesis that ABC, CBS and NBC allowed the United States government to control the discourse about coverage of the boycotts by giving American politicians more opportunities to speak out about them and by giving these comments more prominence in the newscasts. Voices and opinions contrary to those belonging to the Carter (1980) or Reagan (1984) administrations largely were ignored. When these voices were heard, they were consistently placed in a inferior position to the presidents' or members of their staffs. Collectively, these results demonstrate that press nationalism was evident in the coverage of both Olympic boycotts.

The media's endorsement of the American boycott bears special attention in part because President Carter's position was sharply criticized around the world. The IOC and the Soviet Union were the most consistent critics, although they had differing reasons for protesting the American position. The IOC, strongly opposed to the U.S. idea of postponing or moving the Games, looked for a solution that would have allowed for the participation of the Americans and their allies (Killanin, 1983, p. 175). The Soviet Union viewed Carter as "villain number one," (Hazan, 1982, p. 144) who was interested in destroying the credibility of the first Olympic Games held in a socialist country (Hazan, 1982, p. 129). Neither of these views apparently was taken seriously by the television networks, which chose to virtually ignore them. Neglecting them reduced the number of opinions that each American had available to them as they determined the legitimacy of the boycott policy.

Neglecting them also could have led to an incorrect assessment that the world's major powers were backing Carter.

This research used a census of stories generated from the Vanderbilt University television abstracts. Each abstract allowed for the identification of the primary focus and primary subject of a story, although there was not a primary subject in every network report. The findings justify a study of the videotapes which are summarized in each abstract, and are available through the Vanderbilt archives. The tapes would allow for a detailed analysis of the statements delivered by the primary subject of a story. The tapes would also help identify the news frames that were developed in each story.

Finally, this study also adds to the literature suggesting that American news organizations succumb to nationalistic sentiments in their coverage of the Olympic Games. Schillinger and Jenswold (1987) along with Riggs, Eastman and Golobic (1992) have previously demonstrated that selected American media support for U.S. athletes often correlates with reporting and commentary critical of the Soviet Union. There appear to be at least two important distinctions between those studies and this one. The first centers on scope and duration. The aforementioned research focused exclusively on the Olympic Games and did not consider the tone of American media coverage in the weeks and months leading up to them. Second, the "politics of sports" assumed a subordinate position to "sports" in the earlier research, but was the primary focus in this study. Neither of these differences suggests that the earlier research was incomplete. Rather, they indicate that this research examined news coverage from a different perspective but was still able to demonstrate that the television networks were not "objective" in their coverage of Soviet Olympians, politicians, or issues. This study allows one to also conclude that the television networks failed to employ "fairness" and "balance" in their coverage. In the end, "objectivity," "fairness," and "balance" are the benchmarks by which all American media are judged. In their reporting of the 1980 and 1984 Olympic boycotts, ABC, CBS and NBC did not exhibit any of those. Put another way, that coverage certainly did not warrant an Olympic medal.

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APPENDIX A

Intercoder Reliability Report

There were eight coded categories in the content analysis project which examined U.S. network television coverage of the 1980 and 1984 Olympic boycotts.

Three coders were given a randomly selected sample to code. A total of 20 stories were coded. One of the coders was the author of this study. The second coder was a graduate of a large Midwestern university. The third coder was a graduate student in a content analysis class at a medium-sized Midwestern university.

A breakdown of the percentage agreement for each category will be followed by the overall percentage agreement. A discussion of the results accompanies this report.

CATEGORY 1:	Network	PERCENTAGE AGREEMENT: 100%
CATEGORY 2:	Year	PERCENTAGE AGREEMENT: 100%
CATEGORY 3:	Presenter	PERCENTAGE AGREEMENT: 96.7%
CATEGORY 4:	Position in Lineup	PERCENTAGE AGREEMENT: 100%
CATEGORY 5:	Total Topics in Lineup	PERCENTAGE AGREEMENT: 98.35%
CATEGORY 6:	Seconds Devoted to Story	PERCENTAGE AGREEMENT: 91.75%
CATEGORY 7:	Primary Focus	PERCENTAGE AGREEMENT: 80.1%
CATEGORY 8:	Primary Subject	PERCENTAGE AGREEMENT: 78.4%

OVERALL AGREEMENT: 93.16%

There seems to be little necessity to discuss categories one (network), two (year) and four (position in lineup) recognizing that there was 100% agreement in these areas among the three coders. Clearly the coders had no problems identifying the network which delivered the story, the year in which the story appeared, and the position of that story within the overall lineup.

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Category three (story presenter) provided a percentage of agreement of 96.7%. The coders agreed on the presenter in 18 of the 20 cases. In the other two cases, two coders shared agreement on the story presenter.

Category five (total number of topics) had a 98.35% of agreement. On just one occasion did one coder incorrectly identify the total number of topics in the lineup. The author is willing to concede that the coder simply made a mistake here, and either incorrectly counted the total number of topics or inadvertently wrote down the wrong number.

Category six (approximate total number of seconds) returned a 91.75% agreement. The author accepts the lament of the other two coders that they, like the author, are not math majors and therefore more susceptible to making mistakes with numbers. Disagreement with the total time for a story appeared on three separate dates. Unfortunately, on one of those dates three stories connected to one of the Olympic boycotts were disseminated. That meant that the mistake that the coder made in miscalculating the number of seconds had to be recorded each time. Had just one coded story appeared on that evening, the disagreements about time would have been reduced by two and the percentage of agreement would have been higher.

Category seven (primary focus) was shown to have a 80.1% of agreement. Disagreement about the primary focus appeared in eight of the 20 samples. Six of those eight disputed samples included two coders agreeing with each other and a third choosing a separate focus. It is also perhaps worth noting that the two stories which were coded differently by the three coders were the first two randomly selected stories. This might suggest that the coders rapidly became more comfortable with the coding system for this category. The primary complaint returned to the author about this category was that the abstract often did not provide enough information to accurately determine what the primary focus was. One of the coders expressed his wish that he would have been able to view the videotapes of the stories so as to better gauge what the story was discussing.

APPENDIX A

Category eight (primary subject) returned a percentage agreement at 78.4%. Seven of the 20 coded stories had inconsistencies relating to this topic. In four of the seven, two coders agreed on the primary subject while the third coder indicated someone else. The author accepts that he may not have provided sufficient examples or instruction about what constituted the primary subject. The coders often expressed doubt about what the author was seeking for this category and on at least two occasions a coder asked that the category's purpose be explained again.

The author originally intended to have nine categories in this study. The final category was theme. However, during a pretest of the coding instrument the intercoder reliability score was a disappointing 56.9%. On just two occasions did the coders share agreement about the theme of a particular story. The coders were unanimous in their opinion that the theme of a story was almost impossible to determine from the abstracts despite the author's extensive instructions and examples. The author decided at that point to not code for this category. However, the author did not erase the category from the coding sheet, recognizing that if the videotapes of the appropriate news stories are gathered at another time then the theme will be coded.

APPENDIX B

CODE BOOK AND CODING INSTRUCTIONS

There will be eight coded categories in the study of American network television coverage of the 1980 and 1984 Summer Olympic Games. The sample is drawn from a census of stories found on the Vanderbilt University abstracts.

For the 1980 Summer Games, the coding begins on March 21 (when President Jimmy Carter announced that the U.S. Olympic team would not attend the Summer Games) and ends August 4 (the day after the Moscow Games concluded).

For the 1984 Summer Games, the coding begins on May 8 (the day the Soviets announced they would boycott the Los Angeles Games) and ends August 13 (the day after the Los Angeles Games concluded).

A discussion of each coded category follows:

1. Network: This is straightforward. The three over-the-air networks (ABC, CBS, NBC) are the networks being studied. One, and only one, of these networks will apply to each story.

2. Date: This category reflects the year the story appeared on the evening news.

3. Presenter: Four options exist here.

First, an anchor reads the story in-studio.

Second, an anchor provides a lengthy (minimum three lines of text in the anchor introduction) lead-in to a reporter's package. (IMPORTANT: The anchor introduction and reporter package MUST be about the same subject. Note that some abstracts contain two or three stories on one page.)

Third, a correspondent is the primary information disseminator.

Fourth, the presenter can not be determined from the information provided on the abstract.

4. Position in Lineup: This category addresses where the coded selection appeared in comparison to all the other topics in the lineup. (e.g.: 2nd in a 12 topic rundown.) Topics are defined for this study as those that are highlighted in **bold** on the network run-down which is included with each abstract.

APPENDIX B

5. Number of Topics in Lineup: This category addresses the total number of topics in the lineup. (For a definition of topic, see category four above.) This category does not consider where the coded selection appears in the rundown.

6. Approximate Total Number of Seconds Devoted to Story: This figure will be calculated by subtracting the ending time of the story from the beginning time, then converting that figure into seconds. (Each abstract provides the start and finish time of a story.) Please note that many abstracts list two or three stories on one page, but does not break down the time of each selection. Instead the abstract offers only a total time. Coders will be responsible only for determining the total time devoted to the topic on that day. The author will approximate each story when coding all the selections.

7. Primary Focus of a Story: Think of this as the "what" of the story. There are multiple options available to the coder in this category. A brief description of each follows:

-SOVIET ATHLETE: Includes discussion about the quality of the Soviet athlete; the anticipated success that individual should enjoy at the Olympics; how the athlete performed at the Olympics; allegations of cheating or other illegal activity, etc. If a story refers to more than one individual athlete, it should not be coded here. It belongs in the "Soviet Team category."

-SOVIET TEAM: Includes discussion about the quality of more than one individual Soviet athlete and/or a Soviet team; the anticipated success that team should enjoy at the Olympics; how the team performed at the Olympics; allegations of cheating or other illegal activity, etc.

-AMERICAN ATHLETE: Includes discussion about the quality of the American athlete; the anticipated success that individual should enjoy at the Olympics; how the athlete performed at the Olympics; allegations of cheating or other illegal activity, etc. If a story refers to more than one individual athlete, it should not be coded here. It belongs in the "American Team category."

-AMERICAN TEAM: Includes discussion about the quality of more than one individual athlete and/or the American team; the anticipated success that team should enjoy at the Olympics; how the team performed at the Olympics; allegations of cheating or other illegal activity, etc.

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-AMERICAN THREATS OF A BOYCOTT: Story focuses on America's intent to boycott the 1980 Olympic Games; American or Soviet reaction to the threatened action; International Olympic Committee response to the threats; other reaction to the threat, etc.

-IMPACT OF AMERICAN BOYCOTT: References to other nations supporting or rejecting the U.S. boycott; economic loss because of American decision; U.S. attempts to promote a separate athletic competition, etc.

-SOVIET THREATS OF A BOYCOTT: Story focuses on the Soviet's intent to boycott the 1984 Olympic Games; American or Soviet reaction to the threatened action; International Olympic Committee response to the threats; other reaction to the threat, etc.

-IMPACT OF SOVIET BOYCOTT: References to other nations supporting or rejecting the Soviet boycott; economic loss because of Soviet decision; Soviet attempts to promote a separate athletic competition, etc.

-RESULTS FROM 1980 GAMES: Stories highlighting the non-Soviet gold medal winners at the Moscow Games; **SOVIET ATHLETES OR TEAMS ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THIS CATEGORY**

-RESULTS FROM 1984 GAMES: Stories highlighting the non-American gold medal winners at the Los Angeles Games; **AMERICAN ATHLETES OR TEAMS ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THIS CATEGORY.**

-OTHER: Primary theme can not be determined from abstract.

8. Primary Subject in Story: Think of this as the "who" of the story. The primary subject is the person who receives special recognition in the story. Either he or she is given the opportunity to verbally defend or criticize a certain action, or is the subject of a "feature" story. This person should appear early in the story (though not necessarily first) and often will have more than one opportunity to speak. There are multiple options available to the coder. Each is outlined below.

-SOVIET ATHLETE

-SOVIET TEAM

APPENDIX B

-SOVIET OLYMPIC OFFICIAL: This person represents the Soviet Olympic team and is not a politician.

-SOVIET POLITICIAN

-SOVIET CITIZEN

-AMERICAN ATHLETE

-AMERICAN TEAM

-AMERICAN OLYMPIC OFFICIAL: This person represents the US Olympic team and is not a politician.

-AMERICAN POLITICIAN

-AMERICAN CITIZEN

-INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE OFFICIAL

-NONE

-OTHER: Includes any athlete, National Olympic team official, politician or citizen not from the United States or the Soviet Union.

TABLE 1

	ABC						CBS						NBC					
	1980			1984			1980			1984			1980			1984		
	TOTAL STORIES	APPX. SEC.	MEAN POS.	TOTAL STORIES	APPX. SEC.	MEAN POS.	TOTAL STORIES	APPX. SEC.	MEAN POS.	TOTAL STORIES	APPX. SEC.	MEAN POS.	TOTAL STORIES	APPX. SEC.	MEAN POS.	TOTAL STORIES	APPX. SEC.	MEAN POS.
PRESENTER																		
Anchor	52	1470	8.23	31	985	5.81	45	1130	6.8	29	905	7.31	31	940	6.61	31	1050	6.29
Anchor/Corr.	3	510	5.33	1	390	7	3	430	4.33	2	280	2.5	3	350	6.33	1	120	1
Correspondent	31	3780	7.55	52	6245	8.69	28	3580	7.71	44	6030	6.59	27	2810	6.81	45	6040	6.84
FOCUS																		
Soviet Athlete	2	35	13.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Soviet Team	1	30	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
USSR Boycott Impact	0	0	0	31	2145	3.48	0	0	0	24	1795	3.92	0	0	0	31	2470	3.65
American Athlete	0	0	0	4	515	11.25	0	0	0	6	600	9.5	0	0	0	14	1795	10.5
American Team	3	460	7	13	1610	12.46	0	0	0	6	520	5.67	0	0	0	9	1140	10
US Boycott Impact	26	1080	6.42	1	130	2	33	2255	6.61	1	30	1	31	1990	5	0	0	0
Results/1980 Games	9	880	9.67	1	90	11	6	350	12.67	0	0	0	6	490	12.17	3	80	8
Results/1984 Games	0	0	0	2	120	14.5	0	0	0	3	160	5.67	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	45	3275	7.91	32	3010	8.81	37	2535	6.51	35	4110	8.69	24	1620	7.5	20	1725	6.5
SUBJECT																		
Soviet Athlete	2	35	13.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	30	14	1	90	2
Soviet Team	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	250	13	1	90	4
USSR Olympic Official	0	0	0	1	25	2	1	90	1	1	120	1	0	0	0	2	240	8
Soviet Politician	2	40	9.5	1	30	8	2	140	6.5	3	310	6	2	170	2	3	190	7.67
Soviet Citizen	0	0	0	2	250	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	140	2.5	2	210	1
American Athlete	0	0	0	5	735	10.8	0	0	0	7	670	9.86	1	120	2	14	1795	10.5
American Team	7	745	4.14	15	2120	12	3	350	10	7	945	4.71	1	110	4	11	1480	7.64
US Olympic Official	1	90	1	9	770	6.22	5	540	4.8	3	380	6	2	230	2	3	160	5.67
American Politician	6	475	5.67	4	310	3	12	1320	4.33	9	985	2.67	4	320	4	6	515	1.83
American Citizen	2	215	8.5	11	1155	6.91	6	480	11.33	13	1555	7.23	5	300	4.8	4	315	3
IOC Official	4	160	7.25	3	120	3	4	445	10.5	2	150	7.5	4	260	3	0	0	0
Other	17	1685	8.41	13	1280	9.69	8	360	9.88	15	1655	8.07	13	1060	10	13	1325	6.92
None	45	2315	8.42	20	825	5.2	35	1415	6.46	15	445	7.6	24	1110	6.96	17	800	5.65
TOTALS	86	5760	7.88	84	7620	7.61	76	5140	7.04	75	7215	6.76	61	4100	6.69	77	7210	6.55

TABLE 2

COVERAGE OF SOVIET OLYMPIC ATHLETES OR TEAM (1980)

FOCUS

Network	No. Stories	Total Stories	Pct. of Total	No. Seconds	Total Seconds	Pct. of Total
ABC	3	86	3.4	65	5760	1.1
CBS	0	76	0.0	0	5140	0.0
NBC	0	61	0.0	0	4100	0.0

SUBJECT

Network	No. Stories	Total Stories	Pct. of Total	No. Seconds	Total Seconds	Pct. of Total
ABC	2	41	4.9	35	3445	1.0
CBS	0	41	0.0	0	3725	0.0
NBC	3	37	8.1	280	2990	9.4

(NOTE: If a subject was not identified, then it was not counted in the total stories or total seconds columns. This explains the lower totals for these categories.)

TABLE 3

COVERAGE OF AMERICAN BOYCOTT (1980)
WHEN SUBJECT IDENTIFIED
n=46

Subject	Number	Pct. of Total
American Politician	14	30.4%
U.S. Olympic Athlete/Team	8	17.4
Int'l Olympic Committee	7	15.2
Soviet Politician	0	0.0
Other	17	37.0

TABLE 4

COVERAGE OF AMERICAN OLYMPIC ATHLETES OR TEAM (1984)

FOCUS

Network	No. Stories	Total Stories	Pct. of Total	No. Seconds	Total Seconds	Pct. of Total
ABC	17	84	20.2	2125	7620	27.9
CBS	12	75	16.0	1120	7215	15.5
NBC	23	77	29.9	2935	7210	40.7

SUBJECT

Network	No. Stories	Total Stories	Pct. of Total	No. Seconds	Total Seconds	Pct. of Total
ABC	20	64	31.3	2855	6795	42.0
CBS	14	60	23.3	1615	6770	23.8
NBC	25	60	41.7	3275	6410	51.1

(NOTE: If a subject was not identified, then it was not counted in the total stories or total seconds columns. This explains the lower totals for these categories.)

TABLE 5

COVERAGE OF SOVIET BOYCOTT (1984)

Subject	Network	Total Stories	Mean Position
Soviet Politician	ABC	1	8.00
	CBS	2	6.00
	NBC	1	7.67
American Politician	ABC	2	3.00
	CBS	4	2.67
	NBC	5	1.83

Gatekeeping International News:
An Attitudinal Profile of U.S. Television Journalists

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ABSTRACT

Gatekeeping International News: An Attitudinal Profile of U.S. Television Journalists

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This study explores the attitudes of U.S. television journalists toward international news and examines their selection criteria. Q factor analysis of 31 journalists from major national networks and local TV stations yielded three factors: Pragmatic Idealists, Global Diplomats, and Bottom-line Realists. The network journalists support a global view, selecting international news with diverse themes while the local journalists take a more pragmatic stance due to business pressures and audience demands, choosing international news with a local angle. All the journalists give priority to international news with U.S. involvement and are strongly opposed to governmental and advertiser influences.

Gatekeeping International News:
An Attitudinal Profile of U.S. TV Journalists

The world in the twenty-first century is closely interconnected with each other thanks to its sophisticated nerves of communication networks, bringing peoples and cultures together. Despite such potential, the existing trend in television news emphasizes on local and national coverage, leaving little room for international news.

Gans (1979) and Chang and Lee (1992) argue that most international news on U.S. television networks come from selected areas where American political or economic interests are at stake, or where the United States is involved in the news event.

According to Tuchman (1978), news is a constructed social reality and the audience perception toward the news is dependent on how journalists frame it. Although television news is the product of multi-layered decisions, journalists and their news organizations are responsible for the final presentation of news. Television news organizations are business environments with hierarchical systems within which news managers and news workers function (Tuggle & Huffman, 2000). Journalists select certain news stories while rejecting other news based on many different levels of considerations—their personal judgment, newsroom routines, restraints laid by their news organizations, and other societal and cultural influences. In this context, journalists are gatekeepers who cover and select news that flows along the communication channel until it is presented to the audience. In television stations, these gatekeepers are reporters, producers, anchors, and editors, depending on their specific roles and responsibilities. In many instances, the crucial decisions are made by senior editors, senior news producers, and sometimes by executives of news organizations.

The purpose of this study, in the narrow sense, is to explore patterns of attitudes held by television journalists in the United States in selecting international news. It examines individual subjectivity of gatekeepers' editorial judgments. In the broader sense, it compares and analyzes various gatekeeping factors such as individual differences, newsroom routines, organizational constraints, impacts from outside news organizations, and social-cultural differences as described by Shoemaker (1991, 1999) that affect the selection process and the content of the international news on U.S. television.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gatekeeping Theory

The concept of "gatekeeper" was first introduced by Kurt Lewin (1947) who conceived that news flowed along a channel containing several gates controlled by gatekeepers, each of whom would make a decision as to whether the news item should continue through the channel. In 1950, David White pioneered the first gatekeeping study in the field of journalism and mass communication by analyzing a newspaper wire editor's news selection patterns.

Over the past 50 years, the main foci of the gatekeeping research have been to find out the degree of subjective news judgment involved (White, 1950; Snider, 1967; Harmon, 1989). Scholars also explored the characteristics of news values involved in the selection process of news (Gans, 1979; Chang, Shoemaker & Brendlinger, 1987; Chang & Lee, 1992). For example, White focused on the decisions of one journalist, emphasizing personal and subjective aspects of the decision-making process. However, later studies by Gieber (1964), Epstein (1973) and Dimmick (1974) found that gatekeepers are not single individuals making decisions independently. Instead, they are influenced to a great extent by many other factors such as the media owner's ideology, media routines, and official sources including government.

Shoemaker (1991) asserted that gatekeeping in a communication context can be studied on at least five levels—individual, routines of communication work, organizational, social and institutional (extramedia), and social system levels.

At the individual level, selection of news is personal—what kinds of stories does a journalist like or dislike? On the routines of work level, gatekeeping decisions are made according to a pre-established and generalized set of practices in judging newsworthiness. It includes accuracy, the right length, good visuals, human interest, novelty, negativity, conflict and violence, loss of lives, and timeliness of the story.

At the organizational level, television news is a combination of concerted efforts and decisions by journalists within news organizations. Influences from media owners, editorial policies, budget constraints, and the number of foreign news bureaus all play a part (Donohew, 1967; Epstein, 1973; Larson, 1984; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996).

Influences from outside news organizations include but are not limited to news sources, TV audiences and corporate advertisers, media markets and economic forces, government, interest groups, public relations efforts, and competition with other news media (Sigal, 1973; Gandy, 1982; Donahue, Tichenor & Olien, 1989; Lee, 1997).

The societal and cultural influences affect the gatekeeping as to what extent different parts of the world are represented. According to Shoemaker (1999), media in the United States tend to give more coverage to European countries' events and issues than they do to those in Africa and South America. News judgment, according to the cultural perspective, is a product of differences in cultural and social orientations. It holds that cultural, social and other structural attributes differentiate one society from another, and that people with similar attributes tend to relate more with one another (Galtung and Ruge, 1965; Salwen & Garrison, 1989).

From these perspectives, television news stories, including international items, are accepted or rejected based on various factors such as journalists' perceptions of the events, daily working norms, written and unwritten rules of television news organizations, extra-media influences, and societal and cultural influences.

News Determinants Perspectives

Another approach in the news gatekeeping studies focused on how economic, social, political, and geographic characteristics of nations help determine the amount of coverage one country receives in the media of another (Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Ostgaard 1965; Hester, 1974; Rosengren, 1974). In 1979, Herbert Gans identified seven most prevalent international news stories in both print and broadcast media: U.S. actions abroad including major wars and Presidential visits, foreign activity that affects America, relations with totalitarian countries, foreign elections and transfers of power, disasters with great loss of lives, and the oppressions of foreign dictators. Similarly, Rosengren (1974, 1977) found that gross national product, trade data, population, and geographic distance accounted for between one-third and two-third of the variance in foreign election coverage by three elite European newspapers.

With regard to news determinant studies, researchers have used two distinct approaches: gatekeeper perspective and logistical perspective. The gatekeeper perspective involves selecting international news based on various selection criteria set by journalists as gatekeepers. In his studies of news flow into the United States via the Associated Press, Hester (1971, 1974) ranked direct involvement of U.S. interests as a key criterion of newsworthiness for international news coverage. Shoemaker and Reese (1996) identified some of the most important news values as prominence/ importance, human interest, conflict/controversy, the unusual, timeliness, and proximity. Chang, Shoemaker, and Brendlinger (1987) found that relevance to the United States and deviance of the event are the best predictors for U.S. media's coverage of international news. Chang and Lee (1992) noted that threat to the U.S. and world peace, anticipated reader interest, timeliness, and U.S. involvement are important factors. Journalists' individual backgrounds—

foreign language training, professional education, political ideology and availability of news slot and wire services—as well as organizational constraints were also found to be important.

The logistical perspective purports that the economic, social, political and geographic characteristics of a nation determine the amount of coverage one country receives in the media of another. These factors include GNP per capita, index of economic development, population or size of country, cultural and geographic proximity, former colonial ties, ideological groupings, language factor, regionalism, elite status of a nation, and media facilities (Ostgaard, 1965; Galtung, 1971; Ahern, 1984; Larson, 1984; Chang, 1998; Hachten, 1999).

However, studies using news determinant perspectives have inherent limitations, as pointed out by Wu (1998): the use of varied media samples, media framework, key definitions, analysis methods and operational definitions of variables produced conflicting results.

Other perspectives resulted from political debates over the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) since the 1970s, and the sociopolitical changes since the 1990s. Rosenblum (1979) and Hess (1996) assert that international news events in the Western media are predominantly concerned with conflict or violence. Hess, for example, found that there is a direct ratio between violence and its distance from the networks' New York headquarters: the farther from home, the more likely the cameras are lured there by something violent. Hess contends that the actions of foreign governments, especially when they are related to violence and conflicts, have the greatest chances of getting covered by the U.S. media.

The end of the Cold War has had significant implications on how U.S. and foreign television networks treat international news. Norris (1995, 1997), Hoge (1997), and Arnett (1998) found that there has been a decline of international news in the U.S. media during the last decade. The post-Cold War world is viewed by these news professionals as a safer place without formidable enemies, causing people to shift their eyes closer to home and their own communities.

The advent of new communication technologies such as communication satellites, Electronic News Gathering and Internet broadcasting has contributed to the blurring of geographical and cultural distances that once hindered coverage and distribution of international news. One side effect of these technologies is the shutdown of the number of foreign news bureaus, resulting in an increase of the so-called "parachute journalists" who usually fly in and crisscross various foreign news scenes, with superficial knowledge of the events they cover (Heuvel, 1993; Norris, 1997; Arnett, 1998; Hachten, 1999).

METHODS

This study is an attitudinal exploration of U.S. television journalists toward international news that analyzes their selection criteria of international news. Previous studies have neglected to probe into individual journalist's subjective, self-referent ranking of news gatekeeping factors and the typologies of their attitudes toward international news. In order to measure subjective, but standardized evaluations of news stories by experienced broadcast journalists, Q methodology is believed to be pertinent in providing a systematic framework for the measurement of opinions, attitudes, and beliefs of journalists under study.

A Q sample of 50 statements was constructed from the literatures of international news reporting and of gatekeeping theories and personal interviews with broadcast journalists. The Q sample represents:

(1) five different levels of gatekeeping concepts (i.e., Shoemaker, 1991, 1999),

(2) various news determinant factors (e.g., Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996).

(3) attitudes toward international news gathering and flow

(4) attitudes toward journalistic roles in society.

A Q survey was conducted with a purposive sample of 31 television journalists from three major national television networks (ABC, CBS and NBC), the 24-hour cable news network CNN and network-affiliated television stations (KMBC, KCTV, KSHB and WDAF) in the Kansas City area. Q sorting by individual journalists was conducted between August and September 2000 during the researcher's visits to each station. The respondents included foreign editors, senior reporters or news producers who select and process international news for their networks, as well as local TV news directors, reporters, and news producers, in order to represent a diverse array of viewpoints.

The participating journalists were asked to sort the 50 statements on an eleven-point quasi-normal distribution ranging from "Strongly Disagree (-5)" to "Strongly Agree (+5)." Next, they were asked to complete an attached questionnaire with questions about their demographic information and journalistic experience. Each respondent's ranking of 50 statements were factor-analyzed by using QUANL software subject to a varimax rotation.

The Q factor analysis yielded three factors, with factor 1 explaining 37.83 percent of variance, factor 2, 7.26 percent, and factor 3, 5.97 percent. The responses from nine journalists, because they were confounded, were not interpreted after reviewing a re-ordered factor matrix.

All three factors are highly correlated from .563 and .659, indicating that U.S. television journalists in this study tend to share rather similar attitudes toward international news and comparable perceptions of gatekeeping forces in the newsroom. It is believed that the high correlations are due to their standardized news judgment, work routines and experiences.

RESULTS

Demographics of Respondents

Although Q-methodology does not require a large sample size, thus making the comparison of mean scores irrelevant statistically, distinct characteristics can be found from demographic comparison of the journalists in this study.

The 31 respondents comprised ten women and 21 men. Eighteen are network journalists and 13, local journalists. There are eight senior reporters, nine news producers, and 14 senior editors, including foreign editors and news directors. They have a mean of 14.84 years of experience in journalism, with a mean of 7.33 years of experience with their current news organizations. The respondents have been working for a mean of 4.88 years in their current positions.

About two-thirds of them (21) are four-year college graduates and one-third of respondents (10) have post-graduate degrees or training. Twenty-three respondents reported that they have received journalism-related education from various journalism schools in the country.

Two-thirds of the respondents (21) speak at least one foreign language. Among them, twelve speak one foreign language, eight journalists speak two foreign languages, and one journalist speaks three foreign languages. Fourteen respondents (45.2 percent) have experienced living in foreign countries; six of them have lived in foreign countries for more than fifteen years respectively.

When categorized into network and local TV journalists, the mean age of local journalists is 32.77, while the network journalists are older, with a mean age of 41.11. The mean professional experience for local TV journalists is 10.62 years, while network journalists have more professional experience, at a mean of 17.89 years. The local journalists speak a mean of .69 foreign languages, indicating that many of them do not speak foreign language, while network journalists speak an average of 1.22 foreign languages.

Network journalists have lived a mean of 9.97 years in foreign countries while local journalists have only a mean of .23 years of experience living abroad. It is noted, however, that at least three of the network journalists in this study are foreign nationals who grew up in their home countries of Britain, Canada, and Puerto Rico.

Overall, the demographics of the network journalists in this study show that they are older, more experienced professionally, and probably more directly exposed to diverse cultures than the local TV journalists.

Q Factor Analysis

The Q factor analysis of 31 television journalists yielded three factors or attitudinal typologies: Pragmatic Idealists (Factor 1), Global Diplomats (Factor 2), and Bottom-line Realists (Factor 3). Labels were attached to the factors to enable easier visualization of these individual journalists' attitudes toward international news. Each factor represents a group of individuals who share similar attitudes, beliefs and opinions on international news and its selection criteria. The arrays of z scores for the statements in the Q sample represent a hypothetical attitude. The following discussions provide more detailed interpretation of each factor and its arrays.

Factor 1: Pragmatic Idealists

Pragmatic Idealists believe international news is important as a form of public service. In other words, Pragmatic Idealists are the broadcasters who view themselves as purveyors of information and public educators. Specifically, they believe that the best and most responsible news media have always given high priority to international news ($z=1.78$), thus providing the public with knowledge of world affairs ($z=1.70$). This rather pedantic but self-assured attitude is at the core of the Pragmatic Idealists' mindset. Incidentally, of the seven respondents in this factor, six are network journalists from CBS and NBC. Perhaps their exposure to international news in their capacity as foreign news reporters and editors drove them to view international news as the essential diet in network news operations.

The top three statements they most agreed with (12, 31, 13—see Table 1) pertain to news media's role to provide the public with useful knowledge of outside world. The top three statements most disagreed with (21, 32, 39) reveal their opposition to influences from political elites, corporate advertisers and interest groups.

Pragmatic Idealists value the contributions of multinational news organizations such as BBC and Star TV in widening the reach and diversity of international news (z=1.56). They also tend to believe that major global news agencies such as AP and Reuters play a more important role in the gathering and distribution of international news, and these journalists are more likely to doubt effectiveness of network television's foreign news bureaus and correspondents (z=1.06).

Pragmatic Idealists also agree that news organizations in other cultures, due to their different news judgments and criteria, could develop and present international news with different perspectives (z=1.44). These journalists, however, are aware of the barriers that prevent international news from reaching the public. First of all, they believe that the time constraint inherent in the evening news format is the primary reason why not all available international news could be aired (z=1.40).

Pragmatic Idealists' most noticeable news criterion is good visuals (z=1.30). They also tend to emphasize U.S. interests when they select international news (z=1.20). Pressures and influences from public relations officers, corporate advertisers, and interest groups are minimal, if any, to Pragmatic Idealists (z=-2.05). They also disagree that the media owner's philosophy and policy are important considerations in selecting international news (z=-1.39).

Pragmatic Idealists express strong resistance to government control of international news, rejecting the notion of protecting their social norm and cultural identity from deviant and immoral foreign news contents (z=-1.94) or to protect national security and public welfare (z=-1.13). When it comes to press freedom and independence, they tend to believe Western news media are more trustworthy and credible than foreign news media.

They disagree with the view that international news must have domestic implications such as a U.S. hostage crisis in a foreign country to be regarded as newsworthy (z=-1.43). This attitude contradicts the findings from previous studies that usually highlighted U.S. involvement and connection in the news event as a determinant of international news selection (Gans, 1979; Larson, 1984; Shoemaker, 1991; Chang & Lee, 1992). It is believed that Pragmatic Idealists tend to view international news to be more diverse and broader in content than news with domestic connections.

Pragmatic Idealists do not feel influences from government officials and politicians on international news contents (z=-1.24). They also have great faith in journalists and their news judgments, thus rejecting the suggestion that journalists often distort some important perspectives of news due to their subjective judgments (z=-1.14). Thus, it is natural for them to mildly reject the idea that journalists tend to associate with each other to produce similar perspectives (z=-1.02).

Pragmatic Idealists are those who not only to pursue idealistic values of international news as a means to promote public knowledge and understanding of other cultures but they also are aware of the limitations of their news operations. Often, their attitudes toward international news and newsroom gatekeeping forces appear idealistic and philanthropic, leading them to underestimate some of the harsher realities of international newsgathering and distribution.

Factor 2: Global Diplomats

Global Diplomats are journalists who believe that international news is for everyone, and thus the contents and perspectives in the news products also reflect global values regardless of political and ideological divisions. They tend to uphold the values of universalism and the concept of a "global village" where people in every country freely partake in shared news and information.

Of seven Global Diplomats, five respondents are CNN journalists, while the other two journalists are from ABC and NBC networks. The ABC reporter has 19 years of overseas reporting experience as a foreign correspondent and bureau chief while the NBC editor has 20 years of journalistic experience covering both domestic and foreign assignments. Considerations about global audiences and worldwide markets, beyond American television audiences, are believed to be the driving force behind the CNN journalists' disposition cherishing a global and non-partisan philosophy of international news.

The highest loaded statements (31, 1, 47—see Table 2) reveal Global Diplomats' universal perspectives to embrace more diverse contents of international news for the public. The most disagreed statements (21, 2, 32) reflect the Global Diplomats' strong opposition to various restraints laid by corporate advertisers, news organizations and governments.

Like Pragmatic Idealists (Factor 1), the Global Diplomats believe that the selection of international news should be made with a consideration of providing the public with knowledge of world affairs (z=2.05). Global Diplomats also believe that international news is important because images depicted in the news impact many people in different countries (z=1.50).

As for their daily work routines, the Global Diplomats believe it is necessary for editors to consult with individual reporters and producers in order to select a diverse and balanced diet of international news (z=1.78). One CNN respondent remarks that such consultation is important because "Editors in the United States must rely on reporters and producers in bureaus abroad for input on story assignments." Obviously, considering the broad reach and the number of foreign bureaus and correspondents of CNN, it is essential for the 24-hour-news network's editors to communicate with their overseas staffs more frequently than other networks.

Naturally, Global Diplomats tend to demonstrate positive attitudes toward multinational, global television networks such as BBC and Star TV (z=1.22). They also hold open-minded attitudes in believing that different perspectives of international news judgment and selection can be forged from different social and cultural attributes (z=1.22).

Global Diplomats readily admit that their experiences of having lived in foreign countries are useful in helping them decide which international news is more important than others (z=1.07). Says one editor at CNN, "Living overseas has made me aware of many news topics that aren't prominently reported in the United States."

In terms of news selection criteria, Global Diplomats tend to select news about disasters—earthquakes, floods and famines—that affect a large population as important international news (z=1.35). However, they disagree that television's international news must include ingredients such as crisis, conflict and violence (z=-1.57).

To Global Diplomats, timeliness of a story is an important consideration in selecting international news (z=1.08). This can perhaps be ascribed to their work routines covering worldwide breaking news events that require speedy follow-ups and interpretations.

Global Diplomats, like Pragmatic Idealists, are opposed to government control of international news at any cost. For example, they disagree with the view that governments control is necessary for the protection of a country's social and cultural identity (z=-1.94), or for national security and public welfare reasons (z=-1.37). One Global Journalist asserts, "Free speech is the best protection of a society's cultural values."

U.S. involvement or connection is not important for Global Diplomats' news selection since they reject the notion that news about countries which maintain amicable political relations with the United States should be selected as important stories (z=-1.17). Similarly, they disagree with statement 14, "The fate of two Americans arrested in Iraq is a bigger story than a bomb explosion killing 100 Pakistanis in Karachi," which represents an emphasis on U.S. involvement and connection to international news events.

Global Diplomats further disagree that news about geographically closer countries has better chances to get covered as important international news (z=-1.15). One network reporter provides this example: "In the U.S. media, news about Britain and China abound, but news about Canada and Mexico is little."

Considering the worldwide pervasiveness of CNN and the implications of contemporary communication technologies available to major U.S. television networks, Global Diplomats believe the geographical barrier to international news is a story of the past.

Global Diplomats tend to be neutral observers rather than reflect an American perspective in their selection and presentation of international news; they are not keen to take sides. As a CNN foreign assignment editor explains, "We represent global perspectives, not U.S. perspectives only."

Factor 3: Bottom-line Realists

Bottom-line Realists comprise eight journalists, all of whom are from network-affiliated local television stations in Kansas City, Missouri. The pure local characteristic of these journalists suggest that they share much in common among themselves due to the similar patterns of news gathering as well as the same audiences in their TV market. Bottom-line Realists, befitting their name, show strong market-driven or audience-oriented characteristics. They believe that they understand the needs and demands of their local audiences and are aware of the built-in limitations of international news in their local TV market (see Table 3).

First, they strongly agree that important international stories occasionally do not get covered because they lack the "local angle" of high reader interest (z=1.87). One editor reasons, "We rely on our network for coverage of international news due to budget constraints. If we send our

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correspondents to cover international stories, it is usually a local angle on an international story." Bottom-line Realists also believe that time constraint inherent in the evening news format is the primary reason why not all available and important international news stories could be aired (z=1.86).

Bottom-line Realists view international news to be important when it involves U.S. interests (z=1.82). They also report that they will select international news only if United States gets itself directly involved in the news as a concerned party (z=1.53). As pointed out by one Bottom-line Realist, "U.S. involvement helps tie in reasons to attract viewers to stay."

Although Bottom-line Realists concede that international news is important as public knowledge, the types of countries that are of interest to them are rather limited. For example, Bottom-line Realists tend not to select news about small countries if they have no significant relations with the United States (z=-1.36). This pattern can perhaps by attributed to time and budget constraints or lack of audience interest that drive them to limit their scope of interest and the size of international news operations.

Good visuals (z=1.38), timeliness (z=1.27), and unusual or deviant events (z=1.16) are some of the most important selection criteria of international news. One local TV news producer explains that "good video," together with "unusual and deviant items capture viewer attention no matter where they take place."

Like the other two factors discussed earlier, Bottom-line Realists agree with the view that international news should be provided to the audience to equip them with knowledge of world affairs (z=1.13). Confident in their professional judgment, Bottom-line Realists believe that their own news judgment and decisions are the most important tools in selecting international news (z=1.11). They, however, acknowledge the existence of different news judgment on international news due to the differences in culture and news organization orientation (z=1.02).

Bottom-line Realists, due to their relatively smaller news operations compared to network television, believe that there are few, if any, self-restraints set by news organization in reporting controversial international issues (z=-1.98). However, this response is difficult to confirm due to local television stations' disregard for international news. After all, many local TV journalists argue that international news coverage falls into the purview of the networks, not local TV stations. As for organizational restraints, Bottom-line Realists do not feel pressures from their organizations or the media owner's philosophy and policies (z=-1.58).

Just as the Pragmatic Idealists and Global Diplomats, Bottom-line Realists are strongly opposed to government control of news content (z=-1.65). They also disagree that influence from corporate advertisers (z=-1.77) and public relations efforts (z=-1.23) are significant in the selection of international news.

It is evident that Bottom-line Realists' attitudes toward international news and its gatekeeping factors are closely related with their audiences' lack of interest. One local television news director admits, "The local audience should be more interested in international news but they aren't. Viewers' desire for international news has a direct impact on the amount we air. We are a business after all, and viewers translate into money."

Consensus Attitudes of U.S. Television Journalists

Out of 50 Q statements, 24 statements were identified as consensus items, or statements that journalists most agreed upon (see Table 4). Considering that the television journalists in the study share very similar work routines and news judgment, regardless of their market size, the number of consensus items are not surprising. In fact, correlations among the three factors are very high (Factors 1 and 2, r=.613; Factors 1 and 3, r=.659; Factors 2 and 3, r=.563).

First, all respondents believe that the selection of international news should be made with a consideration of providing the public with knowledge of world affairs (z=1.63). It seems that the journalists realize international news is overwhelmed by national and local news and that their audiences show little interest in international news. They concede that important international stories often do not get covered due to the lack of a "local angle" for viewer interest (z=1.28). However, these harsh realities have not eroded these journalists' conviction about the usefulness of international news. They believe that international news is a means of providing their audiences with information about what is happening outside the United States. For these television journalists, however, domestic and local tie-ins are perhaps the best strategy to keep up their audiences' interest in international news.

Second, all three factors feel that there could be different news judgments by journalists in different news organizations in different cultures (z=1.23). They also are aware of the contributions made by the transnational news media such as BBC and Star TV in widening the reach and diversity of international news (z=1.13).

Third, all three factors believe that timeliness (z=1.03) and U.S. involvement (z=1.01) are the most important factors in selecting certain international news. Nevertheless, they also do not want to limit their selection only to news about countries that maintain amicable political relations with the United States (z=-1.05).

Fourth, all three factors are strongly opposed to government control of international news (z=-1.84, z=-1.09). They do not believe that big corporate advertisers (z=-1.78) or interest groups (z=--.94) have significant influence over the selection of international news.

Fifth, the respondents disagree that journalists in general distort important perspectives of international news with their personal biases (z=-1.32). Furthermore, the journalists do not believe that there exists some form of organizational hierarchy which prevents them from selecting certain stories. They also reject the suggestion that they tend to toe the line with their government's foreign policy concerns when reporting international news. Whether or not these responses reflect reality, it is obvious that these journalists believe in their professional judgment, and in upholding the idea of press freedom.

Regarding the logistical aspects of international news gathering, all three factors believe that the existence of overseas news bureaus and the number of foreign correspondents are important criteria in deciding both quality and quantity of international news. They also feel that international news is expensive to gather and thus is subject to more economic constraints than other types of news.

MARKET SIZE MATTERS

Q factor analysis of the U.S. television journalists yielded three factors in which distinctive differences between the network and local television journalists were visible. For example, Pragmatic Idealists (Factor 1) are predominantly network TV journalists (6 out of 7)—the exception being a local TV (KMBC) news producer. Similarly, Global Diplomats (Factor 2) consist predominantly of CNN journalists (5 out of 7), with the remaining two journalists from ABC and NBC respectively. Bottom-line Realists (Factor 3), on the other hand, is composed of eight local television journalists in Kansas City. Based on this finding, it is believed that there exists a relationship between the attitudes of television journalists toward international news and the size of TV market in which they operate. This reasoning is, in fact, in line with the findings from a Q study by Chang (1975) that suggested movie critics tend to show distinctive perspectives based on their association with different types of news organizations, and hence the market size. It appears that Chang's typology of the movie critics also applies to television journalists in this study.

Network television stations and local television stations have different goals and perspectives due to the different demands from their audiences, markets, and the economic constraints they encounter in day-to-day news operations. Similarly, journalists at CNN, unlike other U.S. television networks, show distinctive traits due to the 24-hour cable network's transnational characteristics and global marketing strategies.

DISCUSSION

The Q factor analysis produced three factors—Pragmatic Idealists, Global Diplomats, and Bottom-line Realists—in their attitudes toward gatekeeping international news. Pragmatic Idealists are mostly network journalists who demonstrate open-minded attitudes toward international news as important components of their news operations while understanding their own organizational constraints such as budgets and time limitations. Global Diplomats are predominantly CNN journalists who are willing to include international news as their essential elements of their news operations and accept a broader variety of international news, regardless of their datelines and topics. Bottom-line Realists are entirely local TV journalists, who maintain that international news can fit into news programming only when it provides local angles and connections.

Among the U.S. television journalists, the most noticeable characteristic of each factor is that each is mostly composed of journalists from the same news organizations or from organizations with similar-sized news operations or in the same market. In general, the attitudes of the television journalists toward international news are divided depending on whether they are network journalists or local journalists. For example, CNN journalists belong to one factor, most network journalists another, and local journalists make up the third factor. It is believed that different attitudinal types of television journalists in international news gatekeeping are largely formulated and reinforced within their own news organizations. Different organizational characteristics—local, national, and transnational—and their business objectives are believed to contribute to these different attitudinal types. The findings thus support what other scholars have found. As discussed extensively by

Breed (1955), Hickey (1966, 1968), Donohew (1967), Bailey and Lichty (1972), Epstein (1973), Dimmick (1974), and Shoemaker (1999), organization is the most important determinant in defining and sustaining gatekeepers' attitudes, beliefs, and values.

To be more specific, the market factor is found to be salient for U.S. television journalists due to their business objectives under a commercial-based television system. For instance, Bottom-line Realists or local TV journalists argue that international news is out of the scope of their audience interest and does not fit into their market condition. On the other hand, Global Diplomats, the group to which most CNN journalists belong, tend to maintain that global and nonpartisan perspectives are necessary to embrace their worldwide audiences.

The high correlations found within the U.S. television journalists show that these journalists do share similar professional values, beliefs in press freedom and an emphasis on identical news judgment, such as national involvement, in the selection of international news.

Although the main focus of this study was to explore television journalists' attitudes toward international news and gatekeeping criteria, further studies with more diversified samples—print journalists and news consumers—will be a useful follow-up to find out how journalists and the general public think about international news. Also, further attitudinal studies using Q methodology focusing on the comparisons of U.S. television journalists with broadcasters in other countries would yield additional insightful knowledge about international news selection.

Table 1

Most Agree and Most Disagree Statements for Factor 1: Pragmatic Idealists

12.	The best and most responsible news media have always given high priority to international news.	1.78
31.	The selection of international news should be made with a consideration of providing the public with knowledge of world affairs.	1.70
13.	Multinational, global television networks such as BBC and Star TV contribute to widen the reach and diversity of international news around the world.	1.56
23.	Just like social and cultural attributes differentiate one society from another news judgments on international news stories vary between and among different news organizations in different cultures.	1.44
49.	Time constraints of an evening news format are primary reasons for not being able to air some important international news stories.	1.40
30.	The news media of Western nations have more freedom and independence to report world news, and hence more credibility, than media of other countries.	1.31
5.	I will select news from other countries when it has good visual	1.30
43.	International news that involves U.S. interest should be viewed as important.	1.20
36.	Major international news agencies(AP, Reuters, etc.) play more important roles by providing stories from other countries than do our correspondents in foreign news bureaus.	1.06
14.	The fate of two Americans arrested in Iraq is a bigger story than a bomb explosion killing 100 Pakistanis in Karachi.	.97

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45.	News about countries that maintain amicable political relations with my country should be selected as important international news.	-.96
17.	Journalists tend to socialize with other journalists and thus reflect similar views in selecting international news.	-1.02
3.	It is inevitable for a government to control the content of international news because it often influences over the course of national security and public welfare.	-1.13
33.	Journalists often distort some important perspectives of international news by shaping, displaying, withholding or repeating specific items.	-1.14
38.	Politicians and government officials in my country attempt to manage or manipulate the news so that it favors their causes, their programs, and their image.	-1.24
19.	The media owner's philosophy and policy are important consideration in the selection of international news.	-1.39
27.	Various interest groups influence the selection of international news.	-1.39
40.	International news becomes important when it is really domestic news in a foreign setting, such as a U.S. hostage crisis in a foreign country.	-1.43
21.	The selection of international news is influenced by the interest of big corporate advertisers.	-1.86
32.	It is necessary for a government to regulate international news to protect its social norm and cultural identity from deviant and morally unjustifiable foreign contents.	-1.94
39.	Press releases from public relations officers in various corporations, organizations and foreign governments are important sources of international news.	-2.05

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Table 2

Most Agree and Most Disagree Statements from for Factor 2: Global Diplomats

31.	The selection of international news should be made with a consideration of providing the public with knowledge of world affairs.	2.05
1.	It is necessary for editors to consult with individual reporter and producers in order to select diverse and balanced diet of international news.	1.78
47.	International news is important because the images depicted in the news stories affect millions of people in this country as well as people in other countries.	1.50
42.	News about earthquakes, floods and famines are important international news.	1.35
13.	Multinational, global television networks such as BBC and Star TV contribute to widen the reach and diversity of international news around the world.	1.22
23.	Just like social and cultural attributes differentiate one society from another news judgments on international news stories vary between and among different news organizations in different cultures.	1.22
26.	The more recent the time frame of occurrence, the international news receive more important coverage and treatment.	1.08
34.	My experience of having lived in foreign countries helps me to decide which international news items are more important than others.	1.07
22.	Occasionally important international stories do not get covered because they lack the "local angle" of high reader interest.	1.06
8.	News about small countries with no significant relations to the United States also has to be selected to maintain balanced presentation of international news.	.99

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39.	Press releases from public relations officers in various corporations, organizations and foreign governments are important sources of international news.	-1.05
40.	International news becomes important when it is really domestic news in a foreign setting, such as a U.S. hostage crisis in a foreign country.	-1.08
28.	News about geographically closer countries has better chance of being selected as important international news than the news far away countries.	-1.15
45.	News about countries that maintain amicable political relations with my country should be selected as important international news.	-1.17
14.	The fate of two Americans arrested in Iraq is a bigger story than a bomb explosion killing 100 Pakistanis in Karachi.	-1.21
3.	It is inevitable for a government to control the content of international news because it often influences over the course of national security and public welfare.	-1.37
33.	Journalists often distort some important perspectives of international news by shaping, displaying, withholding or repeating specific items.	-1.47
6.	Television's international news must include ingredients such as crisis, conflict and violence.	-1.57
21.	The selection of international news is influenced by the interest of big corporate advertisers.	-1.72
2.	Self-restraints set by news organization in reporting highly controversial social and political issues make selection of international news difficult.	-1.83
32.	It is necessary for a government to regulate international news to protect its social norm and cultural identity from deviant and morally unjustifiable foreign contents.	-1.94

Table 3

Most Agree and Most Disagree Statements for Factor 3: Bottom-line Realists

22.	Occasionally important international stories do not get covered because they lack the "local angle" of high reader interest.	1.87
49.	Time constraints of an evening news format are primary reasons for not being able to air some important international news stories.	1.86
43.	International news that involves U.S. interest should be viewed as important.	1.82
7.	International news in which the United States gets itself directly involved as a concerned party should be selected.	1.53
5.	I will select news from other countries when it has good visual	1.38
26.	The more recent the time frame of occurrence, the international news receive more important coverage and treatment.	1.27
25.	Unusual or deviant events are likely to be reported in international news.	1.16
31.	The selection of international news should be made with a consideration of providing the public with knowledge of world affairs.	1.13
15.	My own news judgment and decision are the most important tools in selecting international news.	1.11
23.	Just like social and cultural attributes differentiate one society from another news judgments on international news stories vary between and among different news organizations in different cultures.	1.02
48.	Journalism-related degree or professional training programs help me to work as an international news reporter/producer.	.96
28.	News about geographically closer countries has better chance of being selected as important international news than the news far away countries.	.93

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27.	Various interest groups influence the selection of international news.	-.90
12.	The best and most responsible news media have always given high priority to international news.	-.94
45.	News about countries that maintain amicable political relations with my country should be selected as important international news.	-1.02
39.	Press releases from public relations officers in various corporations, organizations and foreign governments are important sources of international news.	-1.23
16.	Due to my news organization's hierarchical structure, I do not have enough latitude in deciding which international news items should be selected and rejected.	-1.34
33.	Journalists often distort some important perspectives of international news by shaping, displaying, withholding or repeating specific items.	-1.35
8.	News about small countries with no significant relations to the United States also has to be selected to maintain balanced presentation of international news.	-1.36
19.	The media owner's philosophy and policy are important consideration in the selection of international news.	-1.58
32.	It is necessary for a government to regulate international news to protect its social norm and cultural identity from deviant and morally unjustifiable foreign contents.	-1.65
21.	The selection of international news is influenced by the interest of big corporate advertisers.	-1.77
2.	Self-restraints set by news organization in reporting highly controversial social and political issues make selection of international news difficult.	-1.98

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Table 4

Most Agree and Most Disagree Statements by All Factors (Consensus Items)

31.	The selection of international news should be made with a consideration of providing the public with knowledge of world affairs.	1.63
22.	Occasionally important international stories do not get covered because they lack the "local angle" of high reader interest.	1.28
23.	Just like social and cultural attributes differentiate one society from another news judgments on international news stories vary between and among different news organizations in different cultures.	1.23
13.	Multinational, global television networks such as BBC and Star TV contribute to widen the reach and diversity of international news around the world.	1.13
26.	The more recent the time frame of occurrence, the international news receive more important coverage and treatment.	1.03
7.	International news in which the United States gets itself directly involved as a concerned party should be selected.	1.01

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27.	Various interest groups influence the selection of international news.	-.94
45.	News about countries that maintain amicable political relations with my country should be selected as important international news.	-1.05
3.	It is inevitable for a government to control the content of international news because it often influences over the course of national security and public welfare.	-1.09
33.	Journalists often distort some important perspectives of international news by shaping, displaying, withholding or repeating specific items.	-1.32
21.	The selection of international news is influenced by the interest of big corporate advertisers.	-1.78
32.	It is necessary for a government to regulate international news to protect its social norm and cultural identity from deviant and morally unjustifiable foreign contents.	-1.84

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A Content Analysis of Television News Magazines:
Commodification and Public Interest

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Abstract

A Content Analysis of Television News Magazine: Commodification and Public Interest

This study finds that the competition of the 12-hour prime time news magazines results in more tabloid story topics, especially in *48 Hours*, *20/20* and *Dateline*. The story topic rankings between several news magazines were significantly similar, and those patterns were also found to be consistent with advertising and audience demographics. This indirectly supports the theory of audience commodity that networks use news content to attract certain "lifestyles" of audiences and sell them to the desired advertisers.

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I. Introduction

In the past few years, the networks' television news magazine[1] format has become increasingly pervasive in prime-time programming. In the spring of 1999, a second edition of CBS's *60 Minutes* was unveiled. ABC expanded to four showings of *20/20*, and NBC revised its program schedule to air *Dateline* five nights a week. These twelve hours of news magazines accounted for nearly 20% of all network prime time programming (Stroud, 1998; Turner and Hosenball, 1998; Zoglin, 1999).

Economics is the primary motivation behind the increased pervasiveness of news magazine programming (Rupertus, 1999). They are significantly less expensive to produce (as much as 50% less) than entertainment comedies and dramas, which can run more than $1.2 million per episode (Coe, 1994; Miller, 1998; Stroud, 1998). The ratings of network news magazines are high, frequently occupying spots in the Nielsen Top 20 ratings (Nielsen Media Research, 2000). Also, news magazines are attractive to advertisers and profitable to networks. The annual advertising revenues generated by network news magazines are listed at the top of the prime time programming in the 1998-1999 season (Hollywood Reporter Guide, 1999; Weintraub, 1998). In addition, unlike most successful entertainment programs showing for only few years, a prestigious news magazine can last for decades (McClellan, 1998).

As the competition from other multichannel television programming has become more severe over the past quarter century, the networks have seen their share of the national commercial TV audience dwindle from 100% to about 50% in prime time and about 39% on a total day basis. The network share of advertising budgets, meanwhile, has fallen from 100% to about 59 cents for every national TV dollar placed by an advertiser (Mandese, 2000). Therefore, the networks need programming strategies to attract audiences and advertisers. With the advantages of low production fees, high ratings and long-term loyalty of viewership (Rupertus, 1999), originally, news magazines were developed as defense mechanisms, used to fill problematic programming slots. Now, news magazines are a network's "secret weapon". They alleviate programming pressures, fill problematic slots and generate respectable ratings (McClellan, 1992; Stroud, 1998).

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[1] This study focuses analyses on the traditional network prime-time investigative journalism because of their high ratings and influences, including CBS's *60 Minutes, 60 Minutes II, and 48Hours,* ABC's *20/20,* and NBC's *Dateline.* However, it also includes the cable and syndicated programs for comparison of news content and advertising. The news magazine programs of cable network are *CNN with Time* and *CNN News Stand* of CNN network, and *Weekend Magazine with Stone Philips* of MSNBC. The syndicated tabloid programs in this study are *Entertainment Tonight, Inside Edition* and *Extra.*

However, the television news magazine has tended to be characterized by its in-depth, investigative approach to journalism. Networks continually claim that news magazines provide a public service for their audiences, acting as watchdogs and uncovering issues for public debate (Rupertus, 1999). Shifting news professionalism to incorporate entertainment programming strategies has been criticized as market-driven journalism (Demas, 1998; McManus, 1994; Rupertus, 1999; Underwood, 1993; Winch, 1997). The competition for ratings results in more tabloid content and styles in news magazines (Pew Research Center, 1998; 1999; Sutherland, 1997), and crime and sex stories become typically the most popular topics (Ehrlich, 1996; Grabe, 1996; 1999).

Most of the existing research has analyzed television news magazines from the perspective of cultural studies (Bird, 1998; Ehrlich, 1996; Langer, 1998; Sholle, 1993). Some of these studies concerned the relationship between the reader and the context, as well as the meanings interpreted; Others conducted a content analysis and compared the news formats and presentation styles in the news magazines (Demas, 1998; Esposito, 1996; Grabe, 1998, 1999; Sutherland, 1997). Very few of them ever analyzed the rise of news magazines from the perspective of economics (Rupertus, 1999).

This study attempts to unveil the economic rationale behind the pervasiveness of news magazines and uses a content analysis to examine their impact on the public interest. It systematically examines their annual trends of ratings, advertising revenues, and spot costs. Then it discusses the theory of media commodification and its impact to the presentation of news topics (McManus, 1992, 1995; Meehan 1984, 1986, 1993; Smythe, 1977).

II. Literature Review

A. Marketplace of Television News Magazines

1. The decline of ratings and advertising in broadcast networks

Cable television networks have become the major competitors to broadcast networks in news, entertainment and educational programming (Baldwin et al, 1992a; 1992b; Wirth, 1990; Youn, 1994), and advertising revenues (Dimmick et al, 1992; Glascock, 1993). The total ratings of the broadcasting networks have dropped from 44.8% to 31.7% and the three major networks, ABC, CBS and NBC, lost almost 50% of audiences between 1985 and 1999. In addition, the percentage of networks' advertising revenues among the total television industry dropped from 37.9% to 27.3% between 1985 and 1999. On the other hand, the rating of basic cable networks increased from 3.6% to 24.3% and the advertising revenues of the cable networks increased from 4.7% to 20.7%

in the same period (Nielsen Research Center, 2000; Television Bureau of Advertising, 2000).

In addition to losing ratings and advertising, the average production fees of network programming have increased a great deal from 1970 ($200,000) to 1995 ($1,000,000). Advertising revenues did not keep up with the rise in production costs in the 1990s, and network profits declined drastically, although the networks introduced severe cost-cutting measures, including huge cutbacks in personnel and departmental budgets (Eastman & Ferguson, 1997; Head et al, 1998).

Networks have tried every strategy to boost their ratings (Adams, 1988, 1993; Atkin & Litman, 1986; Eastman et al, 1995; Lin, 1995). The program strategies of lead-in, inheritance effects or count-programming strategies were used to retain audience flows (Cooper, 1996; Tiedge & Ksobiech, 1986; 1987). However, developing new program formats usually requires substantial costs for audience research and production, and nobody can predict exactly what kinds of formats will really appeal to what kind of audience demographics (Owen & Wildman, 1992). For example, the Big Four networks now introduce nearly five dozen new programs to their prime time schedules each year. In the 1990s, 75% of new series typically fell by the wayside. Some were pulled within a few weeks and some were kept on the schedule only until their replacements were readied (Eastman & Ferguson, 1997, p.122-123).

2. The growth of television news magazines in economic perspective

In order to survive the competition of multichannel television industry, networks need to develop programming strategies for increasing advertising revenues, cutting production fees and creating a long-term loyalty of viewership (Rupertus, 1999). The television news magazines fit these patterns and began to grow very quickly. Nearly two news magazine shows appeared everyday during prime time of the 1999-2000 season.

Table 1 shows the launch year, ownership, ratings, spot costs and advertising revenues of television news magazines. Before 1985, there were only *60 Minutes* on CBS (produced since 1968), *20/20* (1978) on ABC and *Entertainment Tonight* (1981) of the syndication. However, toward the end of the 1980s and the beginning of 1990s, the number of network news magazine programs increased so quickly that there were ten hours weekly in prime time and six programs in syndication in 1994. Although many news magazines appeared in network prime time, most of them were only shown for a short time, like those on NBC and FOX, and few of them survived. However, once the loyalty of viewership has been established, the programs can last for decades. Table 1 shows that if the ratings of news magazines fell below 6.0 – 7.0, they would soon be removed from the prime time schedules.

----- Table 1 about here -----

Before the 1990s, NBC had problems developing a prestigious news magazine (like *60 Minutes* on CBS and *20/20* on ABC) until the success of *Dateline NBC* in 1992, which initiated new competition in news magazine programming. *Dateline has* expanded its shows annually since 1993 and was aired up to five nights weekly in 1998. Furthermore, *20/20* merged with *Prime Time Live* and other ABC news magazines to create four nights of *20/20*. Finally, *60 Minutes II* on CBS was unveiled in 1999 to join the battle. On the other hand, it is interesting to note that several syndicated programs, such as *Hard Copy*, *American Journal*, and *A Current Affair*, ended their shows in 1997-1998 because the audiences, the topics and the guests had been ceded to the networks (Schlosser, 1999).

The news magazines are a low-cost, flexible, long-term, profitable alternative to the high-cost, less versatile, high risk, short running entertainment sitcoms and dramas (Rupertus, 1999). Unlike the unpredictable ratings of new dramas or sitcoms, the offspring of the news magazines usually have stable ratings. Table 2 shows the ratings and weekly ranking trends of network news magazines between 1992 to 2000. Although their ratings have dropped significantly over the past few years, their weekly rankings are nearly the same or even better, such as with *Dateline*. This means that although network news magazines lost audiences, they did not lose as much as the average networks did and their rating performances were better than other entertainment programs.

----- Table 2 about here -----

Table 3 shows the 30-second spot costs of news magazines and other network prime time programming. Although the advertising prices and revenues of news magazines are not as high as those for top entertainment programs at the same rating base, with their low production fees, the prime time news magazine can generate big profits. For example, according to data from *Advertising Age*, the average one-hour news magazine can be expected to gross roughly $2.7 million. That is for a program that costs up to $700,000 to produce as compared to $1 to $2 million in production costs for a standard hour-long drama (Jensen et al, 1998).

----- Table 3 about here -----

In addition, prestigious news magazines can last for a long time and contribute significant profits to networks. For example, in 1997, advertisers spent a total of $791 million on news magazines, up 12% from 1996 and 20% from 1995 (Weintraub, 1998). *Dateline* has helped NBC News achieve annual pretax profits of $115 million, compared with annual losses of close to $130 million in the early 1990s, before *Dateline* debuted. In addition, *Dateline* accounts for 20% of NBC's prime time advertising revenues in 1999 (PBS, 1999). Annual profits at ABC News are now $75 million, due in large part to the *20/20* franchise. *60 Minutes* is certainly one of the most profitable programs in the history of television. Its contribution to CBS's bottom line over the past 30 years is said to exceed $1 billion (McClellan, 1998, July).

News magazines can be used to fill in problem slots, apply counter-programming strategy and generate pretty high ratings. For example, stories addressing women's health issues on *Dateline NBC* now run opposite *ABC Monday Night Football.* The male-oriented features are used to counter-program shows that target females, such as *Dharma & Greg* and *The Nanny* (Carter, 1998a; Stroud, 1998; Miller, 1998).

In addition, news magazines have been able to attract groups that are demographically appealing to advertisers. Some advertisers, such as cosmetic and packaged goods companies, prefer to sponsor a news magazine like *Dateline NBC* because it brings in a more significant portion of the 18-34 year-old demographic than entertainment programs. A news magazine like *60 Minutes* tends to attract males with higher socioeconomic status. This is appealing to advertisers such as investment companies (*Merrill Lynch*, for example) and luxury car companies (Weintraub, 1998).

3. The criticisms of the popular news magazines

The increasing growth of the popular news magazines indicates the convergence of news and entertainment programming, and has been criticized for being market-driven journalism, instead of news professionalism (Consoli, 1998; Rupertus, 1999; Weintraub, 1998). The major criticism is using sensational stories and formats to promote ratings and advertising revenues (Grossman, 1999; Paige, 1998; Zoglin, 1998).

In the past decade, soft news, defined as stories that focus on a human-interest topic, feature or non-policy issue, has dramatically increased on the national network newscasts (McCartney, 1997; Riffe and Holm, 1999; Scott and Gobetz, 1992). The local television news has also been found to place more emphasis on sensationalism than on public affairs (Hoffstetter and Dozier, 1986; Ryu, 1982; Slattery and Hakanen, 1994; Wulfemeyer, 1982).

The increase of soft news in both national and local broadcasts has occurred because it can attract more audience attention. The play theory and the uses and gratification model explain that the consumption of soft news can be viewed as a vehicle by which such enjoyment is obtained, and therefore audiences prefer soft news (Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1985; Rayburn, et al, 1984; Stephenson, 1988). For example, according to the surveys of the Pew Research Center in 1996 and 1998, crime stories were the most popular topic that audiences were interested in.

Following the high demand trend of soft news, crime and sex stories are the most prominent topics in syndication tabloid journalism and are now moving into prime-time network news magazines (Ehrlich, 1996; Esposito, 1996; Grabe, 1996; 1999; Paige, 1998). A study from the Center for Media and Public Affairs (1997) found that almost all stories on the top six syndicated news magazines were related to crime, sex, accident/disasters and self-destructive behavior (Media Monitor, 1997). However, as the audience, the topics and the guests have been ceded from the syndication to the networks, over half of the tabloid news magazines were pushed out of the market (Schlosser, 1999). For example, *Dateline* is now more focused on sensational stories of crime and disasters, and *20/20* reported a significant proportion of stories related to entertainment celebrities (Demas, 1998; Sutherland, 1997).

B. News Topics and Agenda Setting

Networks claim that news magazines provide a public service for their audience, acting as watchdogs and uncovering issues for public debate (Rupertus, 1999). Where does the public obtain its information about issues and policy alternatives? Many models of public opinion suggest that presentation of issues in the media play an important role in shaping the attitudes of the public (Fan, 1988; Page and Shapiro, 1992; Zaller, 1992, 1994). For example, media serves as the primary mechanism by which elite opinion is communicated to the public (McCombs and Shaw, 1972; Lyengar and Kinder, 1987).

This is accomplished through the sheer amount of attention given by media outlets to various issues; the more coverage an issue receives, the further up the agenda it supposedly moves. Agenda setting explains why certain issues in the information environment are considered to be more important than others by the public (McCombs and Shaw, 1993). Experimental evidence demonstrates that when news coverage focuses more on a particular issue, people are more likely to cite the issue as the most important concern facing the nation (Lyengar et al., 1982).

By bringing problems to the public's attention, the investigative news attempts to alter societal agenda – "agenda setting" – the notion that the news media can directly influence the public's priorities (Protess et al, 1991). The basic goal of the journalists is to trigger the agenda-building processes. From this perspective, although television news magazines do not ask us what to think, they do tell us what to think about by showing certain topics and agendas in their programming.

The study of agenda setting has often centered on the relationship between the agenda set forth in the media and the agenda of the public. That research has usually been concerned with verifying the existence of an agenda-setting effect by the media. Less often, studies examine how the media agenda develops (Berkowitz, 1987). Weaver and Elliott (1985) describe this process as "agenda building," where the focus is on how the press interacts with other institutions in society to create issues of public concern. Instead of analyzing the effects of media agendas on public opinion, this study examines the interactive relationship between news topics and advertising.

C. Media Commodification

Smythe (1977) claimed that all mass media industries produce but a single commodity – the audience. Networks design programs and construct schedules specifically to attract certain kinds of viewers in large groups and then sell those audiences to advertisers. In Smythe's formulation, the messages were merely bait, just a "free lunch" designed to lure the audience to the point of sale. Once attracted, the audience then spent its "leisure time" with the mediated bait in such a way that media industries could organize that audience into salable categories for purchase by advertisers (McManus, 1992).

Furthermore, Meehan (1984) argued that neither messages nor audiences are exchanged, only ratings. Those ratings are produced at a particular juncture by a single company that seeks to maximize its profit and minimize its cost. The ratings per se must no longer be treated as reports of human behavior, but rather as products – as commodities shaped by business exigencies and corporate strategies (Meehan, 1986).

Therefore, the ratings become the index to decide how much the advertisers are willing to pay for the commercial spots, and the advertising revenue becomes the major evaluation of the programming performance. The oligopoly competition will only focus on how to increase the ratings. Advertisers have no functional concern with the meaning or consequences of mass communication except insofar as it provides a mechanism for the delivery of their messages to prospective consumers (Bogart, 2000). The competition for the high ratings will reverse back to dominate the programming formats and content, and in indeed, might be in conflict with the performance of public service claimed by the networks.

So, rather than each audience member being considered as an equally important citizen (as we would strive for in a normative public sphere), news media are following in the footsteps of urban newspapers and general interest magazines that were not concerned with losing certain segments of their audiences while trying to attract segments that were more economically attractive (McManus, 1992). National advertisers are paying not for news quality, but for audience "quality" and quantity. Advertisers are expected to support the program that generates the largest audience likely to purchase the products offered, at the lowest cost per thousand viewers.

News magazines are so focused on ratings that they use audience research to track the public's preferences—not program-by-program, not piece-by-piece, but "minute-by-minute". Producers will learn from seeing these kinds of ratings graphs which segments are likely to be the ones that draw an audience. These are the stories news magazines know can do well, and will interest audiences. Thus they have a way to guarantee that they are going to reach the desirable audience that they are trying to reach by doing this kind of programming (PBS, 1999; Sawyer, 1998).

The editorial judgments about what the news magazines are going to air each night are shaped by demographics, ratings, and research. For example, *20/20* was trying to compete against a dramatic show like *Hill Street Blues*. In order to do that, *20/20* needed to target their stories at competing demographic groups. For example, if *Hill Street Blues* was reaching an urban audience, *20/20* would try to reach a southern audience with a large group of stories about country and western music stars. Obviously this programming was aimed at particular communities to try and bring in those viewers (PBS, 1999).

Dateline now "out-pulls" CBS's venerable *60 Minutes* some nights in advertising dollars; the show has become NBC's secret weapon for fixing programming trouble spots. On Wednesdays, it involves a more male-oriented show featuring dangerous animals, travel and adventure, science and technology and other material to counter-program shows more skewed toward females, like CBS's *The Nanny*. A time when *Dateline* creates a softer, more featured show aimed at women is when it is up against *ABC Monday Night Football*. Part of the success of *Dateline* has been to figure out not just good stories, but good stories that work in good time spots (Stroud, 1998).

D. Sensationalism topics and big name hunting

The market-driven news magazines usually set their news topics from the perspective of audience interests. In order to attract audiences, many stories on news magazines are related to crime, sex, family, health, consumer issues, and show business, which are also the most popular topics in which people are interested (Weintraub, 1998; Pew Research Center, 1999; Zoglin, 1992).

A database search of news magazine topics, conducted by the Media Research Center, revealed that while *20/20* also did some serious stories during a two-month snapshot – the silly segments more frequently outnumbered the substantive (Paige, 1998). For example, consider such stories as the woman who used plastic surgery to remake herself as a Barbie doll; children of sperm-bank donors; husbands who do not listen to their wives; fat football players; the health benefits of telling the truth; modeling-school scams; and poetry-publishing. This is not a category of *Jerry Springer* moronathons; it is a sample of "news" segment on ABC's *20/20* during the first two months of 1998 (Paige, 1998). The same situation was found in episodes of *Dateline* where crime and trial related stories overwhelmingly dominated news topics (Paige, 1998; Sutherland, 1997).

In addition to crime or sex stories, news magazines often "produce" shocking consumer news to attract audience attention. In the last three years, the news magazines have aired more than 50 segments on auto safety – some of them innocuous consumer tips, but many others featuring allegations of lethal product defects (McGinn and Turner, 1999). For example, *Dateline* got into trouble for staging an explosion while investigating GM truck safety (Giltin, 1993). ABC's primetime news magazines have suffered a pair of embarrassing legal setbacks: a $10 million libel judgement that a Florida banker won against *20/20* and a $5.5 million verdict against *Prime Time Live* over its use of hidden cameras to investigate Food Lion supermarkets (Gunther, 1997).

Critics contend that in the revved-up effort to lure prime time viewers, some TV news magazine segments are also resorting to dramatic production techniques that not only resemble an entertainment show - but look suspiciously like those used in the more tabloid-oriented shows. The most blatant example occurred when *Dateline* rigged a GM truck to provide a fire. More subtly, pictures are overlaid with heavy music to enhance emotions, action is slowed, and the cuts are quick (Reibstein, 1994).

Probably the most intense competition among the news magazines is for the big, celebrated interview of the moment - Michael J. Fox on his Parkinson's disease, Ken Star on his investigation of the president and, of course, Kathleen Willey and Monica Lewinsky on their alleged Oval Office encounters (PBS, 1999). There were exclusive interviews with the tabloid press star of the week. These shows compete fiercely for such interviews - not just with one another, but also with the daytime talk shows and syndicated magazine shows (Zoglin, 1992).

For example, an estimated 74 million people tuned in to see at least part of ABC's *20/20* episode that featured Barbara Walters' interview of Monica Lewinsky, with an average number of viewers at any one time approaching 50 million. At $800,000 per 30-

second spot, the episode's advertising rates were about 5 times the show's standard price. Estimated take for the two hour telecast: $30 million (Trigoboff, 1999).

III. Research Questions and Hypotheses

According to the theory of audience commodity, different news topics are expected to attract different "lifestyles" of audiences and sell to specific advertisers. For example, *60 Minutes* has been the leader of the traditional news magazines for over 30 years and it is good at the hard news of politics, international affairs and social justice. Because there is few population of audiences interested in the hard news, it is supposed that other competitors like *Dateline* and *20/20*, would show more soft news in a product differentiation approach, such as crime, health and entertainment stories, to attract other majority of audiences. This study would ask:

H1: More soft news will be found in *Dateline* and *20/20* than *60 Minutes*.

To argue that the commodity of news product and audience are sold to the desired advertisers, certain types of news contents should attract specific demographics of audiences and advertisers. Therefore, there should be an association between news topics and advertising types. For example, advertisements for cosmetics or grocery products may often appear during episodes covering topics like women's health or celebrities, which target female audiences. This study would ask:

H2: *60 Minutes I/II* and CNN network have more high social-economic advertising, such as financial services, than other news magazines.

H3: There is an associated relationship between the rankings of advertising categorization and those of news topics among the news magazines.

IV. Research Methods

This study recorded eight weeks of news magazine programs on network channels, cable news channels and the syndicates from Oct. 4 to Nov. 28 in 1999, which covered the new fall season, instead of re-run programming. They generated 96 hours of network news magazines, 64 hours of cable news magazines and 60 hours of syndicated programs. Also there were over 1,400 story segments and 6,000 spots of 30-second advertising.

The ratings data from the network, cable channels and syndicated programs were collected from Nielsen Media Research which was compiled in the weekly issues of *Broadcasting & Cable*. The 30-second advertising spot costs were collected from several issues of *Advertising Age*. Demographic audience characteristics, such as age, gender, education, occupation and income, were obtained from Simmons Market Research 1997.

Each story was the unit of analysis and coded into topic categorization. There were a total of 15 topic categories based on earlier studies (Pew Research Center, 1999; Sutherland, 1997). They were also divided into two subgroups in this study: "Elite Interest" and "General Interest". The "Elite Interest" subgroup included (1) "Politics/Government", (2) "Economics/Business", (3) "Foreign/Diplomacy", (4) "War/Defense", (5) "Social Conflict", (6) "Education", (7) "Health/Welfare", (8) "Science/Technology", and (9) "Art/Culture". The "General Interest" subgroup included (10) "Crime/Court", (11) "Scandal", (12) "Accident/Disaster", (13) "Consumer Alert", (14) "Entertainment/ Sports", and (15) "Other Human Interest".

Each of the 30-second advertising spot was another unit of analysis and coded based on the 18 categories. They were divided into four major sub-groups: "General", "High-Tech", "Finance/Business", and "Program Promotion". The "General" group included (1) "Food/Restaurant", (2) "Home Hardware", (3) "Apparel", (4) "Personal Care", (5) "Medicine/Health", and (6) "Movie/Video/Media". The "High-Tech" group included (7) "Electronics", (8) "Automotive", (9) "Telecommunication", and (10) "Computer/ Internet". The "Financial/Business" group included (11) "Financial Service", (12) "Express Mail", (13) "Jewelry/Watch", and (14) "Travel/Resorts". The "Program Promotion" included (15) "Network/Local" and (16) "News Magazine Itself". Finally, (17) "Government/Organization" and (18) "Others" were also included.

This study checked the reliability of the coding scheme by applying *Cohen's Kappa. Cohen's Kappa = (fo-fc)/(N-fc), but (Po-Pc) / (1-Pc)* is a more precise reliability coefficient because it incorporates a correction for the extent of agreement expected by chance alone (Riffe et al, 1999). All reliability coefficients were within the acceptable range. *Cohen's Kappa* (and standard error for the coefficient) was 0.87 (SE = 0.051) for news topics; 0.96 (SE = 0.021) for advertising.

V. Results

A. Sensational news topics

In Table 4, the categorizations were divided into two subgroups, "Elite Interest" and "General Interest". The percentages of the "Elite Interest" on *60 Minutes I/II* and the CNN network were much higher than others: *60 Minutes* (81.0%), *60 Minutes II* (66.7%), *CNN with Time* (75.9%) and *CNN News Stand* (61.9%). Other programs had dropped significantly in "Elite Interest": *20/20* (23.0%), *Dateline* (20.5%) and *MSNBC* (32.6%). The percentage of "Elite Interest" of *48 Hours* and the syndication programs were very low or even zero: 48 Hours (0%), *Entertainment Tonight* (0%), *Inside Edition* (6.0%) and *Extra* (3.7%).

----- Table 4 about here -----

In the subgroups of "Elite Interest", *60 Minutes* emphasized the topics of "Foreign/Diplomacy" (19.0%), "Health/Welfare" (14.3%), "Art/Culture" (14.3%), "Politics/Government" (9.5%), and "Social Conflict" (9.5%). However, *60 Minutes II* spent more topics related to "Social Conflict" (19.0%), "Health/Welfare" (14.3%) and "Economics/Business" (9.5%). *CNN with Time* devoted more stories to "Health/Welfare" (20.7%), "Politics/Government" (10.3%), "Foreign/Diplomacy" (10.3%), "Social Conflict" (10.3%) and "Art/Culture" (10.3%). On the other hand, *CNN News Stand* devoted many stories to "Economics/Business" (24.8%), and also had a significant number of stories related to the topics of "Politics/Government" (8.4%) and "Science/Technology" (8.0%).

The topic of "Health/Welfare" was the most popular on *20/20* (9.2%), *Dateline* (8.2%) and *MSNBC* (13.0%). Besides, *20/20* also put an emphasis on "Politics/Government" (6.9%), *Dateline* on "Science/Technology" (6.8%), and *MSNBC* on "Education" (8.7%) and "Science/Technology" (8.7%) in the subgroup of "Elite Interest". There was no one topic related to "Economics/Business", "Foreign/ Diplomacy", "War/Defense" and "Art/Culture" on *20/20, Dateline* and *MSNBC*.

In the subgroups of "General Interest", except for *CNN with Time* (6.9%), *CNN News Stand* (5.3%) and *Entertainment Tonight* (5.5%), "Crime/Court" was the most popular story topic and usually over 20% in the news magazines. Even *60 Minutes* and

60 Minutes II devoted significant stories related to crime/court topics and *48 Hours* spent all of the stories on the single crime/court topic: *60 Minute* (19.0%), *60 Minutes II* (19.0%), *20/20* (26.4%), *Dateline* (30.1%), *MSNBC* (19.6%), *Inside Edition* (21.4%) and *Extra* (20.7%).

Except for "Crime/Court", *20/20* devoted stories evenly in other topics: "Scandal" (12.6%), "Consumer Alert" (9.2%), "Entertainment/Spot" (10.3%) and "Human Interest/Myth" (12.6%). *Dateline* emphasized "Accident/Disaster" (16.4%), "Consumer Alert" (13.7%) and "Entertainment/Sports" (9.6%), and *MSNBC* focused on "Accident/Disaster" (13.0%), "Consumer Alert" (10.9%), and "Human Interest/Myth" (19.6%).

In the syndicated programs, except for "Crime/Court", "Entertainment/Sport" and "Scandal" were the most popular topics: *Entertainment Tonight* (75.5% and 16.6%), *Inside Edition* (30.3% and 20.9%) and *Extra* (32.6% and 20.7%). In addition, "Accident/Disaster" and "Human Interest/Myth" also were found to be significant on *Inside Edition* (11.9% and 9.0%) and *Extra* (7.0% and 14.0%).

Table 5 shows the Spearman's correlation between each of the news magazines. The highly significant coefficients indicate the similarity of the topic rankings. For example, *60 Minutes, 60 Minutes II* and *CNN with Time* ($r = 0.556 - 0.715$) are in a group; *20/20, Dateline* and *MSNBC* ($r = 0.580 - 0.795$) are in a group; and the three syndicated programs, *Entertainment Tonight, Inside Edition* and *Extra* ($r = 0.846 - 0.881$) are in a group. However, *48 Hours* is not associated with other news magazines because of only focusing on the topic of "Crime/Court". In addition, significant correlation ($r = 0.580 - 0.800$) exists between the groups of *20/20, Dateline* and *MSNBC* and the group of syndicated programs, because both of the groups emphasize news topics on "General Interests".

----- Table 5 about here -----

B. Advertising Categorization

From Table 6, except for *60 Minutes* and *60 Minutes II*, most of the broadcast and syndication programs have large percentages in "General Consumer Product": *Entertainment Tonight* (59.3%), *Inside Edition* (53%), *Extra* (33.7%), *48 Hours* (41.4%), *20/20* (36.3%) and *Dateline* (39.2%). On the other hand, *60 Minutes*, *60 Minutes II* and the three cable programs have smaller percentage in the general consumer products: *60 Minutes* (14.0%), *60 Minutes II* (15.1%), *MSNBC* (16.5%), *CNN with Time* (8.3%) and *CNN Stand News* (9.7%). However, "Medicine/Health" still takes a significant proportion in most of the programs. It should also be noted that almost no "Apparel" advertising is present in cable programs and only constitutes a small percentage on *60 Minutes* (0.6%) and *60 Minutes II* (0.3%). In addition, no "Personal Care" advertising was found in CNN programs.

----- Table 6 about here -----

Most of the "Electronics" and "Telecommunication" advertising was found in significant proportions in all programs. "Automotive" was the popular advertising in all programs with most of them over 10%. In addition, the three cable news programs have very large percentages in "Computer/Internet": *MSNBC* (32.2%). *CNN with Time* (19.5%) and *CNN News Stand* (37.2%).

The large percentages of "Financial Service" were found on *60 Minutes* (27.3%), *60 Minutes II* (19.5%), *CNN with Time* (22.0%) and *CNN News Stand* (18.2%). Following those are *48 Hours* (10.8%), *20/20* (9.7%), *MSNBC* (10.6%) and *Dateline* (5.3%). Only small percentages of "Financial Service" were found in syndicated programs. In addition, the most significant percentages of "Travel/Resorts" were found in the cable programs: *CNN with Time* (13.2%), *CNN News Stand* (8.8%) and *MSNBC* (3.7%).

Large percentages of "Network Programming Promotion" were found in broadcasting and cable networks: *60 Minutes* (18.4%), *60 Minutes II* (20.5%), *48 Hours* (20.9%), *20/20* (17.0%), *Dateline* (18.0%) and *MSNBC* (15.4%). In addition, some of the news magazines spend a portion of advertising time to promote their own programs: *20/20* (3.9%), *Dateline* (3.6%), *CNN with Time* (3.9%), *Inside Edition* (4.5%) and *Extra* (4.6%). Because the program *Extra* was shown at midnight, a very large percentage (27.9%) of "Adult" advertising was found and included in the "Other" category.

In Table 7, the Spearman's correlation coefficients show that *60 Minutes* and *60 Minutes II* are very similar in advertising ranking with r = 0.826. They also have moderate relationships with the three cable programs with r = 0.538 – 0.765. The three cable programs have high coefficients with r = 0.777 –0.855. *20/20, Dateline* and *MSNBC* have very high coefficients between them (r = 0.811 – 0.954). They also have moderate relationships with the three syndicated programs (r = 0.518 – 0.641). Finally, the three syndicated tabloids have strong relationships of advertising rankings among them (r = 0.775 – 0.892).

----- Table 7 about here -----

Table 8 shows the percentages of advertising categorization in network, cable, spot and syndication. The percentages of "Food/Restaurant" (23.1%, 18.2%), "Home Hardware" (8.3%, 11.6%) and "Personal Care" (8.6%, 5.9%) are very high in both broadcast and cable networks. However, comparing these results with Table 6, those percentages of categories are a little smaller in network news magazines and very low in cable news magazines.

----- Table 8 about here -----

On the other hand, the percentages of "Financial and Insurance" (5.6%, 8.4%) and "Computer and Software" (2.7%, 3.1%) are much lower in both broadcast and cable news magazines, which means that the broadcast and cable news magazines can attract audiences with higher socioeconomic demographics than other programs.

Table 9 shows the demographic data of audiences from Simon Marketing Research 1997. The older audiences have a higher percentage in broadcast and CNN network, especially for *60 minutes*. The younger audiences were found in MSNBC and the syndication programs. Males have a higher percentage in CNN network and females have a higher percentage in *20/20*, *Dateline* and the syndicated programs. The audiences of CNN programs have significantly higher education, include more professional managers, and earn larger incomes than audiences of other news magazines.

----- Table 9 about here -----

VI. Discussions

A. Product differentiation

The media commodifies the audiences for the advertisers by representing "lifestyle" categories in the styles, forms and context of the programming (Jhally, 1990). Prior studies have found that the content and presentation styles of news magazines were distinct to attract different demographics of audiences between the traditional network news magazines and the tabloid ones (Grabe, 1999; Russomanno and Everett, 1996). The topics of most tabloid news magazines were related to crime/violence, sex and accidents/disasters (Media Monitor, 1997) and the traditional news stories were still clearly different from the tabloid ones (Russomanno and Everett, 1996).

However, a couple of researchers comparing news topics within those network news magazines found that some of the new programs, such as *Dateline* and *Prime Time Live*, had more crime and entertainment stories than *60 Minutes*, although hard news topics still took a significant proportion (Committee of Concerned Journalists, 1997; Southerland, 1997).

On the other hand, this study found that the proportions of hard news in several network news magazines were significantly reduced from those in the 1997 studies (Pew Research Center, 1997; Sutherland, 1997). For example, nearly 80% of stories on *20/20*, *Dateline* and *48 Hours* were related to crime/court, scandal, accident/disaster, consumer affair, entertainment or other human interests. *Dateline* had over 30.1% of stories related to crime and court, and *48 Hours* contributed all stories to a single topic – crime stories. Even *60 Minutes* and *60 Minutes II* report the largest proportion of stories (19%) in crime/court topics and *60 Minutes II* began to broadcast more stories related to scandal, disaster/accident and other human interests.

The generation of shows that spawned the term "tabloid television" is dying in syndication. But tabloid news magazines have also diminished because certain kinds of tabloid-style stories have migrated to the traditional news organizations (Mifflin, 1999). The boundary between traditional news magazines and tabloid ones is blurring or merging (Rupertus, 1999). The significantly large coefficients of Spearman's correlation indicate the similarity of news topic rankings among the news magazines, especially between the traditional news magazines and the tabloid ones. The topic rankings of *20/20*, *Dateline* and *MSNBC Magazine* ($r = 0.580 - 0.795$) are not only similar with one another but also with the syndicated tabloids ($r = 0.580 - 0.800$), like *Entertainment Tonight*, *Inside Edition* and *Extra*, which have 80 % of stories in entertainment, crime/court, and scandal.

B. Advertising differentiation and audience commodity

Television programs usually target the general public and therefore most of the advertising is related to food/restaurant, home hardware, personal care, medicine, automotive and movies (Table 8; Television Bureau of Advertising, 2000). Comparing the advertising categorization of total television with that of news magazines (Table 6 and 8), this study found that network and cable news magazines have higher percentages in "Financial Service" and "Computer/Internet", but lower percentages in "Food/Restaurant", "Home Hardware" and "Personal Care". On the other hand, the percentages of advertising categorization in the syndicated tabloid are much more similar to that of the total television programming.

60 Minutes, *60 Minutes II* and CNN programs have higher percentages in "Financial Service"; the three cable programs focused on "Computer/Internet" and "Travel/Resort"; and *48 Hours*, *20/20*, *Dateline* and the syndicated programs have more advertising in "General Product", like food/restaurant, home hardware, personal care, and movies.

The Spearman's coefficients of advertising categorization show very high similarities in advertising rankings in *60 Minutes* and *60 Minutes II*; highly consistent in *20/20*, *Dateline* and *48 Hours*; the cable network programs in a group; and the syndicated programs in a group. The patterns of advertising correlation are similar to those of news story topics, indirectly indicating an association between news content and advertising.

If the demographics data from Simon Media Research were included, it would show that the patterns of story topics, the patterns of advertising and audience demographics are consistent with each other. For example, for *60 Minutes*, *Dateline* and *Extra*, the story topics had gradually shifted from public debate to crime and entertainment stories; the demographics of audiences shifted from professional managers to the general public; and the advertising from financial management to food, personal care and supermarkets.

This is consistent with the findings of some professional journals that news magazines apply the characteristics of topics differentiation and audience segmentation to counter-program and target special advertising (Carter, 1998a; Stroud, 1998; Miller, 1998; Weintraub, 1998). In addition, it also supported the arguments of audience commodity that audiences are grouped by programming and sold for the targeting of specific advertisers (Bogart, 2000; McManus, 1994; Meehan, 1984, 1986; Smythe, 1977).

C. Ratings competition and tabloidism on news topics and agenda

The phenomenon of merging news and entertainment is the result of market-driven journalism. The public's "interest", or the ratings number, decides what news agendas and topics should be. As audiences considered crime and health related stories to be the most interesting topics (Pew Research Center, 1996, 1998), this study did find that crime and health/welfare related stories were the top two topic categorizations in almost all programs, which is consistent with prior researches.

As there are up to four *20/20* and five *Dateline* showings weekly, producers of news magazines are hard-pressed to find new subject matter. A lawsuit can offer all the elements of a made-for-TV drama, with suffering victims and big business playing the stereotypical villain (Stewart, 2001). Although the crime rates have actually decreased in the past few years, this study found that the percentage of crime stories dramatically increased in all programs (Media Monitor, 2000). For example, *48 Hours* devoted all of their stories to crime topics. Also, *Dateline* showed over 38% of story in crime/court stories accompanied with audience on-line participation.

Except for the crime stories, consumer alarm stories can also attract audience's attention and were another popular topic on *Dateline* and *20/20*. News magazines might provide in-depth reporting and helpful information about consumer products, but they also regularly (as much as 40% of the time) report alarming stories unfairly (Jensen, et al, 1998). They stated that when it comes to consumer reporting, "If you scare them, they will watch" could be a slogan for news magazines shows. The same topics of car testing, insurance fraud, and doctors or diet drugs continuously appeared on *20/20*, *Dateline* and *MSNBC*. For example, in the past three years over 50 stories related to car safety were found in the news magazines.

However, news departments are just another program supplier that must compete for prime-time ratings against the enormous lobbying efforts of the Hollywood studios and the networks' own entertainment production companies. It is the network entertainment presidents who decide what type of programming will air in prime time. The fact is that the networks are entertainment companies (Consoli, 1998). That is not news; that is filler. If NBC found five more *Seinfelds*, there would be two or three fewer *Datelines* on the air (Zoglin, 1998)

Everything on TV is based on the ability to deliver an audience that the advertisers want. News magazines are analyzed the same way as entertainment programming. Right now, an appetite is evident for this type of programming (Consoli, 1998). A prime time news magazine has no obligation to cover the "important" news; its goal is simply to win enough viewers to survive. Thus, these shows gravitate toward the same crowd-pleasing subjects: sex, crime, consumer rip-offs, health news, and human-interest weepers. Important, but more remote issues – the budget deficit, education policy, the workings of Congress – are either ignored or reduced to small-scale "people" stories (Zoglin, 1992).

A news magazine like *60 Minutes* tends to attract males with higher socioeconomic status. This is appealing to advertisers such as investment companies (*Merrill Lynch*, for example) and luxury car companies (Weintraub, 1998). So why don't *Dateline* and *20/20* devote their stories to hard news and thus attract the similar audiences and advertisers? As the Television Bureau of Advertising shows (2000), most of the television advertising is targeting general audiences and is related to food, supermarkets, personal care, home hardware, movies, automobiles, and telecommunication. Instead of competing for the niche audience with *60 Minutes*, this study found that *20/20* and *Dateline* focused more on the general public and advertising. They might cover a few of the hard news stories, but most are related to crime and entertainment news.

In addition to the preference of audiences and advertisers affecting the news agenda, both the traditional and tabloid news shows' producers rely heavily on outside groups for assistance (Paige, 1998). Both of them use free-lance field crews and it is not uncommon for those crews to alternate work between news magazines and tabloid shows (Dewerth-Pallmeyer and Hirsch, 1994).

VII. Summary and Conclusion

Compared with prior research, this study finds that the competition of the 12-hour prime time news magazines results in more tabloid story topics, especially in *48 Hours*, *20/20* and *Dateline*. The story topic rankings between several news magazines were significantly similar, and those patterns were also found to be consistent with advertising and audience demographics. This indirectly supports the theory of audience commodity that networks use news content to attract certain "lifestyles" of audiences and sell them to the desired advertisers.

However, in the 2000-2001 season, only *60 Minutes* remained in top 15 weekly Nielsen ratings, and the others were the reality programs, game shows and several hit dramas and sitcoms. For example, seven of the top 15 ratings of 2000-2001 season are the reality shows such as *Survivors II*, *Big Brother* and *CSI* (CBS), and four copies of the game show *Who Wants to a Millionaire* (ABC). With the re-emergence of drama and reality TV craze hitting it big in the 2000 season, the number of hours devoted to news magazines has shrunk to 9-hours weekly. But news magazine staffs have remained largely intact, leaving the news divisions ready and willing to lend a hand if need be (Flint, 2000).

The phenomenon is consistent with what Don Hewitt, *60 Minutes* executive producer, said that behind every news magazine, there is a failed sitcom and if that sitcom hadn't failed, that news magazine would not be there. Now networks find that reality and game shows are more easily to produce and attract desired audiences, so the number of television news magazines programs reduced. The decreasing of news magazine programs is not because few good news stories are available, but simply because there are other substitutions can perform better in attracting audience and advertising than news magazines.

This study included all news magazine programs of broadcast, cable and syndicated and coded eight weeks of programming. For those weekday programs, like *CNN News Stand* or *Inside Edition*, they generated 40 programs and over 120 stories, which is sufficient to represent the population. However, for the weekly programs, like *60 Minutes* or *48 Hours*, the eight programs and 24 stories included might not completely represent the population as they should because the errors in each story could have a significant effect.

In addition, the data of audiences came from the Simmons Market Research. The percentages of audience demographics in different programs were found, but their relationships with programs were unknown. If we could also do a survey from the perspective of audiences, we could understand what rationales are used by audiences to choose among the different news magazines, and then conduct more complicated measurement between variables. For example, we may ask: what characteristics of news stories attract various audiences? What are their "lifestyles" in terms of advertising categories? And we could apply regression model or factor analysis to test other specific hypotheses.

VIII. Tables

Table 1. News magazine ratings, 30 second advertising cost, and total revenues in 1999

Program	Launch Year	Conglomerate Ownership	Rating	Advertising Cost Per 30 second	Total Revenues ($ in millions)
Network					
60 Minutes	1968	Viacom (CBS)	13.2	$ 240,000	$ 101.7M
60 Minutes II	1999		9.5	$ 196,000	$ 70.0M
48 Hours	1988		8.1	$ 80,000	$ 35.0M
20/20	1978	Disney (ABC)	10.6	$ 130,000 ($85,000-$160,000)	$ 231.6M
Dateline	1992	GE (NBC)	8.7	$ 110,000 ($89,000-$138,000)	$ 314.4M
Cancelled show				($60,000-$160,000)	($20.0M – $80.0M)
West 57th	1986-89	Viacom (CBS)	6.0		
With Connie Chung	1989-95	Viacom (CBS)	7.5		
Public Eye to Eye	1997-97	Viacom (CBS)	6.0		
Day One	1992-95	Disney (ABC)	7.0		
Turning Point	1989-97	Disney (ABC)	7.5		
Prime Time Live	1989-98	Disney (ABC)	8.0		
With Jane Pauley	1991-92	GE (NBC)	6.0		
With Tom Brokaw	1992-92	GE (NBC)	6.0		
With Maria Shriver	1992-92	GE (NBC)	6.0		
Front Page	1993-94	News (FOX)	5.0		
Cable					
CNN News Stand	1998	AOL/Time Warner	0.5	$ 10,000	$ 30.0M
CNN with Time	1998	AOL/Time Warner	0.5	$ 10,000	$ 10.0M
MSNBC Weekend Magazine	1998	GE(MSNBC) /Microsoft	0.2	$ 8,000	$ 8.0M
Syndication					
Entertainment Tonight	1981	Viacom	5.7	$ 112,000	$ 50.1M
Inside Edition	1988	Viacom	3.3	$ 23,000	$ 14.1M
Extra	1994	AOL/Time Warner	3.7	$ 67,000	$ 65.8M
Access Hollywood	1996	News (FOX)/NBC	3.5	$ 34,000	$ 40.0M
Cancelled show				($5,000-$10,000)	($5.0M – $10.0M)
National Enquirer	1999	Nat'l Enquire/MGM	2.0		
Free Speech	1999	USA Cable	1.0		
End show				($10,000-$50,000)	($10.0M – $ 50.0M)
Hard Copy	1989-98	Viacom	5.0-2.0		
American Journal	1993-98	Viacom	3.0-2.0		
A Current Affair	1987-97	News (FOX)	3.5-2.0		

Note: Figures from September 1998 through May 1999.

Source: 1. The ratings for end show of network news magazines compiled from "Electron magazines" of Spragens (1995).

2. Total revenue: Hollywood Reporter Guide to the Television Season, September 1999.

3. Syndication revenues and spots: Advertising Age, 71 (3): January 17,2000

Table 2. The ratings/shares and ranking trend of network news magazines (1992 – 2000)

Rating	60 Minutes	60 Minutes II	48 Hours	20/20	Prime Time Live	Dateline
1999 - 2000	12.3/21	8.9/14	7.4/12	9.0/15 9.6/17-8.4/14	-	8.6/14 9.4/16-7.1/12
1998 - 1999	13.4/22	8.9/14	7.6/13	9.8/17 10.1/17-7.5/11	-	9.5/16 9.9/16-7.5/12
1997 - 1998	14.1/23	-	8.1/13	10.2/18 11.2/21-8.9/15	10.7/18	10.2/17 11.7/20-8.2/13
1996 - 1997	13.7/23	-	7.2/12	12.4/23	12.0/21	10.2/17 11.4/19-8.5/13
1995 - 1996	14.5/25	-	7.4/12	14.2/26	12.4/22	11.1/18 11.8/20-10.5-18
1994 - 1995	17.6/29	-	9.1/15	13.9/25	11.2/19	11.1/18 11.5/19-10.5/16
1993 - 1994	20.7/32	-	11.5/19	13.9/25	13.9/24	10.4/17
1992 - 1993	22.7/36	-	13.5/23	15.6/29	14.0/24	10.5/18

Ranking Weekly	60 Minutes	60 Minutes II	48 Hours	20/20	Prime Time Live	Dateline
1999 - 2000	5 ~ 15	25 ~ 40	35 ~ 65	5 ~ 40	-	15 ~ 60
1998 - 1999	5 ~ 15	20 ~ 45	35 ~ 65	10 ~ 50	-	10 ~ 60
1997 - 1998	5 ~ 15	-	35 ~ 65	10 ~ 50	20 ~ 40	10 ~ 70
1996 - 1997	5 ~ 15	-	50 ~ 80	10 ~ 20	20 ~ 35	15 ~ 60
1995 - 1996	5 ~ 15	-	50 ~ 70	5 ~ 20	15 ~ 35	15 ~ 50
1994 - 1995	3 ~ 10	-	35 ~ 60	10 ~ 30	15 ~ 55	30 ~ 70
1993 - 1994	1 ~ 5	-	25 ~ 55	10 ~ 30	15 ~ 35	35 ~ 60
1992 - 1993	1 ~ 3	-	20 ~ 40	5 ~ 20	10 ~ 35	45 ~ 65

Source: Data complied by author from weekly issues of Broadcasting and Cable, October – April, 1992 – 2000

Table 3. Trends of news magazine and network prime time advertising cost of a 30-second spot (1992 – 2000)

Program	**2000**	**1999**	**1998**	**1997**	**1996**	**1995**	**1994**	**1993**	**1992**
60 Minutes	$235,000	$240,000	$240,000	$165,000	$160,000	$205,000	$225,000	$210,000	$220,000
60 Minutes II	$160,000	$196,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
48 Hours	$120,000	$ 90,000	$ 80,000	$ 70,000	$ 80,000	$100,000	$140,000	$150,000	$135,000
20/20* (mean)	$126,700	$128,000	$128,300	$143,300	$182,500	$202,500	$145,000	$145,000	$107,500
	$100,000	$119,000	$ 90,000	$100,000	$170,000	$210,000	$140,000	$130,000	$ 95,000
	$150,000	$160,000	$160,000	$160,000	$195,000	$195,000	$150,000	$160,000	$120,000
	$130,000	$ 85,000	$135,000	$170,000	-	-	-	-	-
	-	$148,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dateline (mean)	$133,300	$112,200	$110,000	$118,800	$123,300	$116,700	$105,000	$100,000	$105,000
	$ 65,000	$ 89,000	$110,000	$100,000	$110,000	$140,000	$105,000	$100,000	$105,000
	$155,000	$128,000	$115,000	$115,000	$150,000	$110,000	$105,000	-	-
	$120,000	$138,000	$130,000	$140,000	$110,000	$100,000	$105,000	-	-
	-	$101,000	$ 90,000	$120,000	-	-	-	-	-
	-	$100,000	$105,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
CBS									
Maximum	$460,000	$312,000	$275,000	$260,000	$300,000	$335,000	$290,000	$250,000	$310,000
Minimum	$ 90,000	$ 82,000	$ 70,000	$ 70,000	$ 60,000	$ 90,000	$ 75,000	$ 80,000	$ 55,000
Mean	$204,600	$167,600	$128,100	$151,300	$146,800	$170,800	$148,100	$137,800	$135,800
S.D.	$ 91,400	$ 63,700	$ 52,000	$ 47,600	$ 76,800	$ 70,400	$ 51,800	$ 41,400	$ 61,200
ABC									
Maximum	$360,000	$380,000	$375,000	$360,000	$450,000	$475,000	$350,000	$300,000	$290,000
Minimum	$ 70,000	$ 75,000	$ 60,000	$ 55,000	$ 65,000	$ 80,000	$ 80,000	$ 65,000	$ 55,000
Mean	$199,800	$173,500	$173,800	$168,800	$185,600	$201,000	$155,200	$142,700	$135,200
S.D.	$ 85,600	$ 85,900	$ 84,800	$ 82,100	$ 96,000	$103,100	$ 71,400	$ 73,100	$ 62,100
NBC									
Maximum	$620,000	$545,000	$565,000	$575,000	$550,000	$490,000	$390,000	$295,000	$300,000
Minimum	$ 65,000	$ 89,000	$ 75,000	$ 90,000	$ 80,000	$ 90,000	$ 75,000	$ 65,000	$ 50,000
Mean	$228,300	$196,100	$183,400	$197,500	$204,800	$196,800	$152,300	$118,100	$133,300
S.D.	$159,100	$132,500	$126,500	$129,100	$124,600	$109,500	$ 71,400	$ 52,100	$ 54,600

Note: *20/20 includes the advertising cost of Prime Time Live before 1998.

Source: Data complied by author from annual report of Advertising Age, September, 1992-2000.

Table 4. Categorization of news topics based on the "number" of stories

	Broadcasting Network						Cable			Syndication		
	CBS				**ABC**	**NBC**	**MSNBC**	**CNN**		**Viacom**	**Viacom**	**TW**
Program	60 Minutes	60 Minutes II	48 Hours	CBS Total	20/20	Dateline	Weekend Magazine	CNN with Time	CNN News Stand	E.T.	Inside Edition	Extra
# of Stories (1243)	21	21	7	49	87	73	46	29	226	290	201	242
Politics/Government	9.5%	4.8%	0%	4.8%	6.9%	2.7%	0%	10.3%	8.4%	0%	0.5%	0%
Economics/Business	4.8%	9.5%	0%	4.8%	0%	0%	0%	3.4%	24.8%	0%	0.5%	0.4%
Foreign/Diplomacy	19.0%	4.8%	0%	7.9%	0%	0%	0%	10.3%	2.2%	0%	0%	0%
War/Defense	0%	4.8%	0%	1.6%	0%	0%	0%	3.4%	4.0%	0%	0%	0%
Social conflict	9.5%	19.0%	0%	9.5%	2.3%	1.4%	2.2%	10.3%	4.4%	0%	0.5%	0.8%
Education	4.8%	0%	0%	1.6%	4.6%	1.4%	8.7%	3.4%	3.5%	0%	1.5%	0%
Health/Welfare	14.3%	14.3%	0%	9.5%	9.2%	8.2%	13.0%	20.7%	3.1%	0%	2.0%	1.7%
Science/Technology	4.8%	4.8%	0%	3.2%	0%	6.8%	8.7%	3.4%	8.0%	0%	1.0%	0.8%
Art/Culture	14.3%	4.8%	0%	6.3%	0%	0%	0%	10.3%	3.5%	0%	0%	0%
Elite Interest Sub total	**81%**	**66.7%**	0.0%	**49.2%**	23.0%	**20.5%**	32.6%	**75.9%**	**61.9%**	0.0%	6.0%	3.7%
Crime/Court	19.0%	19.0%	100%	46.0%	26.4%	30.1%	19.6%	6.9%	5.3%	5.5%	21.4%	20.7%
Scandal	0%	4.8%	0%	1.6%	12.6%	4.1%	0%	6.9%	0.4%	16.6%	20.9%	20.7%
Accident/Disaster	0%	4.8%	0%	1.6%	5.7%	16.4%	13.0%	6.9%	15.5%	1.4%	11.9%	7.0%
Consumer Alert	0%	0%	0%	0%	9.2%	13.7%	10.9%	0%	0%	0%	0.5%	1.2%
Entertainment/Sport	0%	0%	0%	0%	10.3%	9.6%	4.3%	0%	16.8%	75.5%	30.3%	32.6%
Human interest/Myt	0%	4.8%	0%	1.6%	12.6%	5.5%	19.6%	3.4%	0%	1.0%	9.0%	14.0%
General Interest Sub total	19.0%	33.3%	100%	50.8%	77.0%	79.5%	67.4%	24.1%	38.1%	100.0%	94.0%	96.3%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Niche Breadth	7.23	8.32	1.00	4.05	7.13	6.13	7.15	9.45	7.28	1.66	4.89	4.60

Table 5 Spearman's rho correlation of story topic categorization based on the number of stories

	60 Minutes	**60 Minutes II**	**48 Hours**	**20/20**	**Dateline**	**MSNBC Weekend magazine**	**CNN & Time**	**CNN News Stand**	**E.T.**	**Inside Edition**	**Extra**
60 Minutes	--										
60 Minutes II	.556* (.031)	--									
48 Hours	.418 (.121)	.438 (.102)	--								
20/20	-.216 (.440)	-.016 (.955)	.442 (.099)	--							
Dateline	-.216 (.440)	-.049 (.862)	.437 (.103)	.725** (.002)	--						
MSNBC Magazine	-.089 (.751)	.074 (.794)	.416 (.123)	.580* (.023)	.795** (.000)	--					
CNN & Time	.715** (.003)	.609* (.016)	.064 (.821)	-.114 (.686)	-.217 (.437)	-.184 (.511)	--				
CNN Newsstand	.040 (.887)	.183 (.513)	.124 (.660)	-.248 (.372)	.054 (.848)	-.151 (.591)	-.089 (.753)	--			
E.T.	-.381 (.161)	-.086 (.761)	.368 (.177)	.727** (.002)	.580* (.023)	.333 (.226)	-.245 (.379)	.112 (.692)	--		
Inside Edition	-.292 (.290)	-.024 (.933)	.376 (.167)	.800** (.000)	.765** (.001)	.611* (.016)	-.236 (.397)	.149 (.595)	.846** (.000)	--	
Extra	-.355 (.194)	.081 (.773)	.347 (.205)	.798** (.000)	.776** (.001)	.580* (.023)	-.257 (.355)	.004 (.990)	.850** (.000)	.881** (.000)	--

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 6. Percentage of advertising categorization in television news magazines

	Broadcasting Network						Cable			Syndication		
	CBS				**ABC**	**NBC**	**MSNBC**	**CNN**		**Viacom**	**Viacom**	**TW**
Program	60 Minutes	60 Minutes II	48 Hours	CBS Total	20/20	Dateline	Weekend Magazine	CNN with Time	CNN News Stand	E.T.	Inside Edition	Extra
Average # of nat'l 30 second spot	22.9	21.2	23.9	22.7	23.6	24.8	27.2	22.7	24.2	15.4	13.6	15.8
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
General	13.0%	15.1%	41.4%	23.8%	34.3%	39.2%	16.5%	8.3%	9.7%	59.3%	53.0%	33.7%
Food/Restaurant	2.4%	1.4%	8.7%	4.6%	10.9%	12.7%	2.9%	3.3%	1.1%	23.6%	17.2%	11.7%
Home hardware	1.6%	2.0%	9.0%	4.3%	6.2%	6.6%	1.8%	1.1%	1.0%	18.2%	12.4%	6.4%
Apparel	0.6%	0.3%	7.8%	3.0%	5.0%	5.0%	0%	0%	0%	3.7%	1.7%	5.3%
Personal Care	1.2%	3.3%	3.9%	2.8%	4.5%	5.2%	1.2%	0%	0%	5.3%	6.2%	5.1%
Medicine/Health	7.2%	7.4%	10.2%	8.3%	6.4%	6.0%	8.0%	3.9%	3.2%	3.5%	11.3%	3.5%
Movie/Video/Media	0%	0.7%	1.8%	0.8%	3.8%	3.7%	2.6%	0%	4.4%	5.0%	4.2%	2.7%
High-Tech	27.1%	30.0%	19.5%	25.2%	28.8%	28.3%	50.4%	35.6%	50.4%	29.4%	19.0%	25.2%
Electronics	5.6%	2.0%	2.7%	3.5%	1.9%	3.0%	2.0%	1.7%	1.5%	5.8%	8.5%	4.8%
Automotive	8.0%	11.2%	5.1%	8.1%	8.7%	9.0%	14.1%	10.5%	6.0%	14.1%	15.8%	8.2%
Telecommunication	1.9%	3.3%	6.0%	3.3%	4.6%	4.9%	2.1%	6.9%	5.7%	8.4%	2.1%	4.1%
Computer/On-line	11,6%	13.5%	5.7%	10.0%	13.6%	11.4%	32.2%	19.5%	37.2%	1.1%	0%	1.9%
Financial/Resort	37.0%	28.0%	13.5%	25.9%	12.3%	9.0%	16.6%	40.6%	32.4%	2.4%	4.2%	0.8%
Financial service	27.5%	19.5%	10.8%	19.1%	8.7%	5.3%	10.6%	22.0%	18.2%	1.6%	2.8%	0.3%
Express mail	6.6%	4.4%	1.8%	4.2%	2.7%	2.3%	2.3%	3.3%	2.8%	0%	0%	0%
Travel/Resorts	1.6%	1.4%	0.3%	0.7%	0.8%	0.7%	3.7%	13.2%	8.8%	0.8%	1.6%	0%
Jewelry/Watch	1.3%	1.7%	0.6%	0.8%	1.1%	0.7%	0%	2.1%	2.3%	0%	0%	0.5%
Gov & Org	2.0%	2.0%	1.5%	1.6%	2.0%	0.9%	0%	0%	0.1%	1.5%	0.8%	1.8%
Others	1.5%	2.8%	3.0%	1.8%	3.8%	1.0%	1.0%	2.9%	2.4%	4.6%	2.1%	31.1%
Promotion	19.4%	22.5%	21.5%	21.1%	20.9%	21.6%	15.7%	12.7%	5.0%	2.8%	13.5%	12.6%
Network/Local	18.4%	20.5%	20.9%	19.9%	17.0%	18.0%	15.4%	8.8%	4.3%	2.5%	9.0%	8.0%
Program AD	1.0%	2.0%	0.6%	1.2%	3.9%	3.6%	0.3%	3.9%	0.7%	0.3%	4.5%	4.6%
Niche Breadth	6.92	7.76	9.92	8.93	11.01	10.83	5.89	7.65	5.16	7.67	9.27	7.05

Table 7 Spearman's rho correlation of story topics categorization based on number of stories

	60 Minutes	**60 Minutes II**	**48 Hours**	**20/20**	**Dateline**	**MSNBC Weekend magazine**	**CNN & Time**	**CNN News Stand**	**E.T.**	**Inside Edition**	**Extra**
60 Minutes	--										
60 Minutes II	.842** (.000)	--									
48 Hours	.333 (.208)	.374 (.154)	--								
20/20	.386 (.140)	.417 (.108)	.825** (.000)	--							
Dateline	.306 (.250)	.378 (.149)	.811** (.000)	.954** (.000)	--						
MSNBC Magazine	652** (.006)	.548* (.028)	.347 (.188)	.558* (.025)	.561* (.024)	--					
CNN & Time	.765** (.001)	.654** (.006)	.269 (.313)	.311 (.242)	.264 (.324)	.777** (.000)	--				
CNN Newsstand	.623** (.010)	.514* (.042)	.032 (.905)	.190 (.481)	.112 (.680)	.807** (.000)	.855** (.000)	--			
E.T.	-.159 (.556)	-.106 (.695)	.491 (.053)	.456 (.076)	.572* (.021)	.049 (.858)	-.207 (.441)	-.267 (.318)	--		
Inside Edition	-.016 (.952)	.007 (.980)	.557* (.025)	.478 (.061)	.607* (.013)	.258 (.335)	-.072 (.790)	-.167 (.537)	.863** (.000)	--	
Extra	-.229 (.294)	-.153 (.572)	.518* (.040)	.524 (.037)	.641* (.007)	-.063 (.815)	-.309 (.244)	-.448 (.082)	.892** (.000)	.775** (.000)	--

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 8. Advertising in television

	Network	**Cable**	**Spot TV**	**Syndication**
Food/Restaurant/Beverage/Beer	23.1%	18.2%	16.8%	26.1%
Home hardware	8.3%	11.6%	3.0%	10.8%
Apparel/Shoes	2.4%	3.0%	0.5%	1.3%
Personal Care	8.6%	5.9%	1.5%	11.6%
Medicine/Health	9.4%	6.6%	1.6%	12.6%
Movie/Video/Media	5.4%	4.8%	4.4%	5.5%
Electronics	1.8%	2.8%	0.7%	2.6%
Automotive	14.8%	10.0%	24.8%	6.4%
Telecommunication	3.9%	5.5%	4.3%	7.8%
Computer and Software	2.7%	3.1%	0.8%	0.8%
Financial and Insurance	5.6%	8.4%	6.2%	3.1%
Jewelry and Watch	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.3%
Travel/Resorts	0.9%	2.6%	2.8%	0.7%
Government and Organization	1.1%	0.9%	4.6%	0.4%
Retail	7.0%	5.6%	17.6%	4.2%
Local service and amusement	0.2%	2.2%	6.7%	1.6%
Others	4.8%	8.9%	4.2%	4.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Note: 1. The total advertising here does not include Network/Local programming promotion, so the percentage of each category is around 20% more than the content analysis of advertising.

2. Retail includes Wal-Mart, Kmart, Home Depot, Best Buy, Circuit City, J.C. Penney, and Sears, which are included in Home hardware, Electronics, and Apparel in the content analysis of advertising.

Source: Advertising Age, September 4, 1999.

Table 9. Percentage of Audience Demographics in terms of age, sex, education, occupation, and income

		Broadcasting Network				Cable			Syndication		
		CBS		ABC	NBC	MSNBC	CNN		Viacom	Viacom	TW
	Survey Population	60 Minutes	48 Hours	20/20	Dateline	News Network	CNN with Time	CNN Prime News	E.T.	Inside Edition	Extra
Age 18-34	33.1% 100	13.6% 41	22.7% 69	23.4% 71	28.5% 86	44.3% 133	27.8% 84	19.7% 59	30.9% 93	31.5% 95	40.3% 122
35-49	31.9% 100	25.2% 79	32.3% 101	35.2% 110	32.1% 100	30.1% 94	24.4% 76	34.2% 107	34.6% 109	30.7% 96	34.9% 109
50+	35.0% 100	61.2% 175	45.0% 129	41.4% 118	39.0% 111	25.7% 74	47.7% 137	45.3% 130	33.6% 96	37.9% 108	24.8% 71
Sex Male	47.9% 100	46.7% 97	50.1% 105	45.1% 94	43.8% 92	48.5% 101	54.8% 114	53.8% 112	41.0% 86	38.7% 81	46.2% 96
Female	52.1% 100	53.4% 102	49.9% 96	54.9% 105	56.2% 108	51.5% 99	45.2% 87	46.2% 89	59.0% 113	61.3% 118	53.8% 103
Education High School	58.9% 100	57.1% 97	64.3% 109	59.7% 101	59.4% 101	56.6% 96	51.0% 86	48.9% 83	57.9% 98	61.2% 104	61.6% 105
College 1-3	19.8% 100	19.8% 100	17.9% 90	19.1% 97	20.8% 105	21.8% 110	19.6% 99	23.2% 117	21.6% 109	24.3% 122	21.4% 108
College graduate	21.3% 100	23.1% 109	17.7% 83	21.2% 100	19.9% 94	21.6% 102	29.4% 138	27.9% 131	20.5% 96	14.5% 68	17.0% 80
Occupation Professional/Manager	18.3% 100	18.9% 103	16.3% 89	19.1% 104	17.7% 97	18.3% 100	20.4% 112	23.9% 130	19.8% 108	10.8% 59	15.9% 86
Technical/Clerical/ Sale	19.0% 100	14.0% 74	17.9% 94	19.2% 101	19.9% 105	22.7% 119	19.3% 101	16.8% 88	23.9% 126	19.3% 101	17.0% 89
Labor worker	24.7% 100	15.1% 60	19.0% 77	19.8% 80	19.6% 79	25.9% 105	19.4% 76	21.2% 86	20.2% 82	21.2% 86	27.2% 110
Unemployment or homemaker	13.3% 100	10.4% 78	13.2% 99	13.9% 104	15.9% 119	11.3% 85	7.7% 58	9.7% 76	16.7% 125	19.2% 144	18.2% 136
Retired	17.8% 100	35.9% 202	26.5% 149	21.4% 120	20.0% 113	14.5% 82	24.1% 136	23.3% 131	12.4% 70	22.8% 128	13.6% 76
Individual Income $40,000 and more	14.2% 100	15.1% 106	12.8% 90	15.8% 111	13.9% 97	13.6% 96	18.5% 130	20.2% 142	14.0% 97	8.2% 58	10.9% 76
$15,000-$39,999	29.3% 100	22.3% 76	25.3% 86	26.8% 91	27.2% 93	30.1% 103	25.1% 86	28.1% 96	28.7% 98	25.6% 88	29.9% 102
$14,999 and less	19.7% 100	11.8% 60	16.4% 83	16.8% 85	17.8% 90	23.6% 120	16.4% 83	14.1% 71	21.3% 108	18.2% 92	24.0% 122

Note: 1. The index is referred to the survey population, which is assumed to be 100. 2. The individual income did not include the unemployed or the retired.
Source: Simon Marketing Research, 1997.

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Running Head: Agenda Setting

Agenda Setting and its Theoretical Elaboration

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Agenda Setting and its Theoretical Elaboration

Introduction

Almost 80 years ago Walter Lippmann observed that the mass media, primarily newspapers and magazines in his day, create our pictures of the world in "The World Outside and the Pictures in Our Head" in *Public Opinion* (Lippmann, 1922). Lippmann's intellectual offspring, agenda setting, is a detailed theoretical explanation about the contribution of mass communication to those pictures in our heads. Specifically, agenda setting focuses on the transfer of salience of the elements in the mass media's pictures of the world to the elements in the pictures our heads. The core theoretical idea is that elements prominent in the media become prominent in the audience's picture. In the words of the agenda setting metaphor, this is a causal assertion that the priorities of the media agenda influence the priorities of the public agenda (McCombs, 2000).

Since the initial work of McCombs and Shaw (1972), many works regarding agenda setting have been produced and developed. During its first 25 years, the agenda setting literature has grown to include more than 200 separate articles and more than a dozen books dealing specifically with this topic (Rogers, Dearing & Bregman, 1993, p.70). Even after Rogers et al.'s analysis, the research concerning the agenda setting has been continued and its theoretical elaboration and ramification proceeded.

In this paper, theoretical developments of the agenda setting will be presented. Also, its relevant theoretical extensions, framing and priming will be examined. Finally, the role of mass media in constructing public opinion and the relationship between the mass media and the audience will be explored.

Background

Before the Chapel Hill study of McCombs and Shaw, the person who refined Lippmann's idea into the more theoretical one was Bernard Cohen. Cohen's frequently cited observation that "The press is significantly more than a purveyor of information and opinion. It may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think *about* (Cohen, 1963)," became the basis for what we now call the agenda setting function of the mass media (Baran & Davis, 2000, p.300). Also, Funkhouser(1973) explained that the news media possess a power to create a picture of social reality whose salience are at considerable variance with the 'world outside' even though he did not designate this concept as agenda setting.

Presenting their work as a challenge to the limited effects model, McCombs and Shaw in the 1968 Chapel Hill study tested the proposition that through their day-to-day selection and display of the news, the mass media influence public perception of what are the important issues of the day. In particular, they believed that a causal relationship existed between the media and the public. Over time, the priority issues of the news media would become the priority issues of the public. The priorities of the news agenda are readily apparent to their audience. In newspapers, cues include the size of the headline, the length of the story, and the page on which the story appears. These cues help the audience in prioritizing the small number of issues selected for attention in the daily news (McCombs & Bell, 1996, pp.94-95). This basic idea of the agenda setting, in popularizing the summary statement about media not telling audiences what to think but what to think about, is clear a rejection of the persuasion paradigm which persisted until the late 1960s and the rediscovery of powerful effects of mass media (Kosicki, 1993, p.103).

Original Findings and Theoretical Development

The dependent variable in the 1968 study was *salience*, which refers to whether or not something is perceived as important or prominent. To operationalize this concept, McCombs and Shaw focused on one of public opinion's major outcomes, the public's perception of the most important problem facing the country. The independent variable in the Chapel Hill study was news media content(media agenda). To test the agenda-setting hypothesis, McCombs and Shaw combined responses to their open-ended survey question with a content analysis of the nine major news sources used by Chapel Hill voters (McCombs & Bell, 1996, p.95). The correlation between the major item emphasis on the main campaign issues carried by the media and voters' independent judgments of what were the important issue was +.967. McCombs and Shaw named this transfer of salience from the media agenda to the public agenda the agenda-setting influence of mass communication (McCombs & Bell, 1996, p.96).

After this initial finding, there have been many works that replicate or corroborate the agenda setting function of mass media. According to Rogers et al., there are three kinds of agenda setting research: public agenda setting, policy agenda setting, and media agenda setting (Rogers, Dearing & Bregman, 1993, p.69). Following Rogers et al.'s categorization, Kosicki explained that public agenda setting deals with the link between issues as portrayed in mass media content and the issue priorities of the public (Kosicki, 1993, p.101). This public agenda setting is what McCombs usually said 'first level agenda setting.' Policy agenda setting studies are those making their dependent variables the issue agenda of public bodies or elected officials, or those focusing on issues in the legislative arena and their connections to media content or procedures. Media agenda setting examines the antecedents of media content relating to issue definition, selection, and emphasis (Kosicki, 1993, p.101). Media agenda setting is a relevant concept to the second level of agenda setting(McCombs' term) or framing and priming, which concepts are examined in the latter part of this paper.

McCombs divided his public agenda setting into four phases after his original finding. The first phase was the initial study discussed above. The second phase investigated the contingent conditions that enhance or limit media's agenda setting influence, with particular emphasis on the concept of need for orientation (McCombs, 1993, p.59). As McCombs and Bell properly pointed out, this second phase is related to the uses and gratifications approach in that it searches for psychological explanations for agenda setting. That is, the original research question, "What are the effects of the media agenda on the public agenda?" becomes "Why do some voters expose themselves to certain mass media messages more than do other voters?" (McCombs & Bell, 1996, p.101).

Agenda setting entered its third phase during the 1976 election when Weaver, Graber, McCombs, and Eyal (1981) extended the idea of agendas into two new domains.

One was the agenda of candidate characteristics reported by the media and learned by voters; the other was the larger agenda of personal concerns on which all aspects of politics- issues, candidates, and so on[1]-are but a single, and usually minor, item (McCombs, 1993, p.59). By the 1980s, a fourth phase of agenda setting research transformed the news agenda from independent variable to dependent variable. The original research question, "Who sets the public agenda?" has been rephrased to ask, "Who sets the news agenda?" To answer this latter question, agenda setting researchers have concentrated on the work of journalists and editors as they operate as 'gatekeepers,' decision makers who control the flow of news (McCombs & Bell, 1996, p.104).

Second Level of Agenda Setting and Framing

More recently agenda setting research not only elaborated its main theme, *what* to think about, but also extended its focus to *how* to think about. According to McCombs, both the selection of objects for attention and the selection of attributes for thinking about these objects are powerful agenda setting roles. An important part of the news agenda and its set of objects are the perspectives and frames that journalists and, subsequently, members of the public, employ to think about and talk about each object. These perspectives and frames draw attention to certain attributes and away from others (McCombs, 2000). McCombs refers to this transmission of attribute salience as the second level of agenda setting rather than framing (e.g. McCombs, 2000, McCombs and

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[1] However, Kosicki argued that everything that researchers have associated with agenda setting is not necessarily agenda setting. Following Becker(1991), Kosicki said that it is possible to extend the agenda-setting 'metaphor' to such an extent that the essential meaning is lost and only confusion remains (Kosicki, 1993, p.102).

Bell, 1996, McCombs, 1993). Also, McCombs, Shaw, and Weaver (1997) suggested that framing is an extension of agenda setting. However, it is interesting to note that other scholars seldom use the term of 'second level of agenda setting' and they usually employ the term of framing. As Scheufele properly pointed out, as a result of these terminological and conceptual inconsistencies, other studies have referred to agenda setting and framing without differentiation (Scheufele, 1999, p.104).

Framing, as a way of organizing the world's experiences, was introduced by the work of Goffman (1974). According to Goffman, audience framing involves invoking 'schemata of interpretation' that allow individuals to "locate, perceive, identify and label" information coming from the environment (Goffman, 1974, p.21). Despite the fact that news stories use standard forms, audience members assemble the data about a candidate or issue into a causal narrative or story that reflects their point of view or frame (Kinder & Mebane, 1983). This narrative then serves as a framework for understanding other news stories (McLeod, Kosicki, & McLeod, 1994, p.139). Gitlin also defined frames as "persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse" (Gitlin, 1980, p.7). In the same fashion, Entman also noted that to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described (Entman, 1993, p.52). Tankard et al. describe a media frame as the central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggest what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration (Tankard, et al., 1991, p.3). Iyengar and Simon said that research on framing has studied the effects of alternative news frames on the public's attributions of responsibility for issues and events. Also, they explained that the concept of framing has both psychological and sociological pedigrees. According to them, psychological perspectives typically define framing as changes in judgment engendered by alterations to the definition of judgment or choice problems. On the other hand, sociological perspectives on framing tend to focus on the use of story lines, symbols, and stereotypes in media presentations (Iyengar & Simon, 1993). At the same time, people's information processing and interpretation are influenced by preexisting meaning structures or schemas (Scheufele, 1999, p.105). Therefore, framing is a complex construct in that it refers both to the process of individual and interpersonal sense-making and to the content or output of that process (McLeod, et al., 1994, p.140).

Framing to the Integration

As examined above, there are some differences between McCombs and his colleagues and other scholars in defining and conceptualizing the framing. It seems that McCombs and his colleagues are primarily focusing on the sociological perspective of Iyengar and Simon's categorization while others are using the concept of framing in a broader way.

One of McCombs' students, Ghanem (1997) suggests that there are two major hypotheses about the second level of agenda setting. The first hypothesis is that how an issue is covered in the media, or the attributes emphasized, affects how the public thinks about the issue. The second hypothesis purports that how an issue is covered in the media, or the attributes emphasized, affects the salience of that issue on the public agenda.

While second level agenda setting does have a different focus than its first level of agenda setting, the parallels between first and second level agenda setting have become relatively clear (Kensicki, 2000). The principal similarity is in that the independent and the dependent variables do not differ and both are comprised of a media agenda and a public agenda. The only variation between the two approaches is how one conceptualizes the variables (Ghanem, 1997).

Along the same line, McCombs argues that one of the strengths of agenda setting that has prompted its continuing growth over the years is compatibility with a variety of other communication concepts and theories. Moreover, he said that agendas of attributes are the second level of the agenda setting process, an aspect of the theory that further explicates Walter Lippmann's (1992) idea of the mass media as a major bridge between "the world outside and the picture in our heads" (McCombs, 2000). Recently, McCombs himself notes that there are differences in definitions on the nature of agenda of attributes comparing Tankard's definition and Entman's. For Tankard, it is the agenda of the attributes that define the central theme of the message while Entman's definition is broader, speaking of the agenda of attributes that highlight various aspects of the messages' object of attention. According to McCombs, the difference in these definitions, central theme versus aspects, can be described in terms of Tankard's metaphor of a framed picture. In the case of the central theme, our concern is with the central focus of the picture. In the case of aspects, the frame distinguishes between what the picture includes and what is outside, a use of the term very similar to the original idea of framing in photography (McCombs, 2000). McCombs furthers that this distinction between frames that define the central theme of a news account about an object and frames that describe various aspects of the object also is apparent in recent research explicitly grounded in second level agenda setting theory (McCombs, 2000) citing Jasperson et al.'s study which said "further theoretical elaboration of the agenda setting perspective with a second level, or framing, perspective offers a richer explanation of changes in public opinion" (Jasperson, Shah, Watts, Faber and Fan, 1998, p.210). In this regard, it seems that McCombs see framing as an extension of the agenda setting as he said framing is "the new frontier in agenda setting research" (McCombs & Bell, 1996, p.108). However, Kosicki argued that it is not. According to Kosicki, framing begins from explicit cognitive perspectives and leads in new directions unanticipated by the original agenda setting model. If the initial phase of mass communication research involving media and public issues examined primarily what topics made it onto the public agenda, the next phase is likely to examine how the issue is framed and discussed, and the consequences of such framing (Kosicki, 1993, p.117).

Unlike McCombs and his colleagues, Scheufele categorized framing as media frames and individual frames (Scheufele, 1999, pp.106-107). In the category of media frames, Gamson and Modigliani conceptually defined a media frame as "a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events…The frame suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue" (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987, p.143). Tuchman offered a similar definition for media frames: "The news frame organizes every day reality and the news frame is part and parcel of everyday reality…it is an essential feature of news" (Tuchman, 1978, p.193). Media frames also serve as working routines for journalists that allow the journalists to quickly identify and classify information and to package it for efficient relay to their audience (Gitlin, 1980, p.7). This concept of media framing can include the intent of the sender, but the motives can also be unconscious ones (Gamson, 1989). Above mentioned Entman's (1993) definition which emphasized selection and salience also can be included in this category (Scheufele, 1999, p.107).

According to Scheufele, in the category of individual frames, two frames of reference can be used to interpret and process information: global and long-term political views and short-term, issue-related frames of reference[2] (Scheufele, 1999, p.107). Whereas global political views are a result of certain personal characteristics of individuals and have a rather limited influence on the perception and interpretation of political problems (Kinder, 1983, p.414), short-term, issue-related frames of reference can have a significant impact on perceiving, organizing, and interpreting incoming information and on drawing inferences from that information (Pan & Kosicki, 1993, p.56). Similarly, McLeod et al. employed the concept of individual frames to describe how audiences make sense of political views. They conceptually defined individual frames as cognitive devices that operate as non-hierarchical categories that serve as forms of major headings into which any future news content can be filed (McLeod et al., 1987, p.10).

Furthermore, Scheufele made a topology combining media frames and individual frames with categorization of dependent variables and independent variables (Scheufele, 1999, p.109).

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[2] Similarly, Iyengar and Simon also divided frames as episodic and thematic terms. The episodic frame depicts public issues in terms of concrete instances or specific events. The thematic news frame, in contrast, places public issues in some general or abstract contest (Iyengar & Simon, 1993). Iyengar and Simon's categorization is also in the individual frames; in this case individual frames function as dependent variables (Scheufele, 1999, p.112).

Whether we follow the McCombs' explanation of framing as the second level of agenda setting or broader definitions of framing that emphasize cognitive process of framing, it is true that media can elaborate and reinforce a dominant public opinion.

Priming

Whereas the term agenda setting reflects the impact of news coverage on the importance accorded issues, the term priming effects refers to the ability of news programs to affect the criteria by which political leaders are judged (Iyengar & Simon, 1993). According to Iyengar and Kinder, priming is really an extension of agenda setting[3] and addresses the impact of news coverage on the weight assigned to specific issues in making political judgments. In general, the more prominent an issue in the national information stream, the greater its weight in political judgment (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). That is, as applied to media use, exposure to a given type of content or message activates a concept, which for a period of time increases the probability that the concept, and thoughts and memories connected with it, will come to mind again (Berkowitz & Rogers, 1986).

Priming effects by television news have been established in several experiments by Iyengar and Kinder, for evaluations of both presidents and members of Congress and across a wide range of political judgments, including evaluations of political performance and assessments of political leader's personal traits. In general, news coverage of political issues induces stronger priming effects in the area of performance assessments and weaker priming effects in the area of personality assessments (Iyengar & Simon, 1993).

This political information processing research reflects a grounding in schema theory, which posits that people organize their perceptions of the environment into cognitive knowledge structures-i.e., mental clusters of information (Domke, Shah, & Wackman, 1998, p.53). Once activated, schema facilitate and shape the processing of information, thereby providing the raw materials upon which individuals form evaluations and come to understand their social milieu (Graber, 1988). According to this perspective, individuals do not draw upon all applicable cognitive constructs to guide information processing; rather, people tend to over-sample 'accessible' schema (Higgins & Bargh, 1987). These 'accessible' schema, if judged to be applicable, may alter the basis for evaluating seemingly unrelated objects because judgments often 'depend less on the entire repertoire of people's knowledge and more on which aspects of their knowledge happen to come to mind (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987, p.64).

Research on accessibility and the spread of activation, then, suggests that priming effects may depend on a combination of factors: the frequency or recency of activation and the inter-connectedness between distinct cognitions (Domke, Shah, & Wackman, 1998, p.54). For example, in research from an agenda setting perspective, Schleuder, McCombs, and Wanta (1991) examined how linkages between mental constructs influence the retrieval of information about candidates from memory; their conclusions suggest that examination of spreading activation should be expanded to study other media related effects. Also, Domke and Shah found that voters form different psychological linkages with issues based on the interaction of their core values with media coverage; in turn, these issue interpretations' shape information processing and judgment (Domke & Shah, 1995). Therefore, the particular values emphasized in media coverage are likely to

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[3] Kosicki argued again that priming is not an extension of agenda setting (Kosicki, 1993, p.117).

play a critical role in voters' evaluations and information processing (Domke, Shah, & Wackman, 1998, p.55).

The concepts of framing and priming above examined can be linked to cultivation theory because cultivation theorists believe that television violence cultivates feelings of victimization and other perceptions of social reality in viewers. Likewise, framing and priming by the news media have consequences on the public (McCombs & Bell, 1996, p.107). One consequence is that heavy viewers are more likely than light viewers to find the world a frightening place to live (Berger, 1989). Heavy viewers who witness crime and violence on television think that there is more crime and violence in society than is really present and therefore develop heightened fears of becoming a crime victim (McCombs & Bell, 1996, p.107).

Theoretical Status of Agenda Setting and Framing

The theoretical status of agenda setting has been controversial. There have been many designations such as approach, hypothesis, model, theory, or even paradigm. However, the original conceptualization of agenda setting can be conceived as an underspecified and constrained stimulus-response approach (Kosicki, 1993, p.100) even though it tried to overcome the limitations of the dominant paradigm--limited effects of mass media--before its introduction. In the below, the evaluation of the theoretical status of agenda setting and framing would be examined as their theoretical elaboration and expansion has been progressed.

According to Chaffee and Berger, a theory is "a set of constructs that are linked together by relational statements that are internally consistent with each other" (Chaffee & Berger, 1987, p.101). From this definition of theory, they argued that agenda setting meets some of the factors they presented[4] better than others. Even though they recognized that agenda setting has several limitations such as limited explanatory power, it seems that Chaffee and Berger regard agenda setting as a theory.[5] However, it may be more appropriate to regard agenda setting as a model in that model is a more modest and limited term than theory and it seems to capture the essential characteristics of the perspective (McQuail & Windahl, 1981). For example, agenda setting introduced the concept of 'need for orientation' to enhance media's agenda setting influence in the second phase of its theoretical development. This means that agenda setting has limited explanatory power and McCombs and Shaw tried to elaborate their agenda setting for more specific situations. Even if the introduction of 'need for orientation' and 'contingent conditions' can be regarded as an extension of agenda setting's key concepts in that it enabled agenda setting to be connected to 'uses and gratification' and emphasized the active nature of audience, it disabled the ability of agenda setting to be falsifiable as a theory.[6] Furthermore, although agenda setting was a challenge to the limited effects paradigm, it seems that the introduction of 'need for orientation' assumed a return to the limited effects in some sense. In this regard, Kosicki's assertion that agenda setting is rather a model and one particular type of media effects hypothesis that suggests a relationship between media coverage of topics and the salience of those topics (Kosicki, 1993, p.102) is more persuasive. Kosicki, however, furthers that agenda setting as a model has proven to be remarkably flexible, having expanded well beyond its initial boundaries of matching aggregate media agendas with aggregate public opinion data (Kosicki, 1993, p.117). According to him, as a research enterprise, agenda setting has branched out to guide inquiry not only in audience studies, but in the areas of news work, media content, and public policy as well. Also, methodological skill has increased rapidly over the years (Kosicki, 1993, p.117). Therefore, it can be concluded that agenda setting has been an active model of theory building process in the mass media effect research tradition.

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[4] The factors include explanatory power, predictive power, parsimony, falsifiability, internal consistency, heuristic provocativeness, and organizing power (Chaffee & Berger, 1987, pp.104-105).

[5] This can be derived from sentences like *as a simple two-construct prediction it*(agenda-setting) *is certainly parsimonious, and in its matching of the orders of two sets of issues it is internally quite consistent…it has been heuristically provocative…it has fairly strong predictive power…it is falsifiable in that several studies have searched for agenda-setting effects and not found them…it is relatively narrow theory, not very useful for organizing knowledge beyond the studies specifically directed at it* (Chaffee & Berger, 1987, p.105).

Finally, regarding framing it seems that more time is needed to assert a solid theoretical status. As Scheufele put his endeavor into categorizing various approaches and integrating them into a comprehensive model, framing is still characterized by theoretical and empirical vagueness (Scheufele, 1999, p.103). Also, Entman referred to framing as "a scattered conceptualization" (Entman, 1993, p.51) with previous studies lacking generally applicable operationalization. In other words, framing is not a clear concept but a confusing metaphor with which there exist some terminological and conceptual inconsistencies. Therefore, as Scheufele properly concluded, even in the field of media effects, the concept of framing is far from being systemized into a consistent theoretical model (Scheufele, 1993, p.118).

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[6] A study conducted by Miller et al. (1990) which found no significant agenda setting effects in television indicates that agenda-setting is falsifiable.

Conclusion – Media Effects and Human Nature

Since the early 1980s mass media studies have been be characterized by 'social constructivism' (Scheufele, 1999, p.105). The description of media and audiences combines elements of both strong and limited effects of mass media. On the one hand, mass media have a strong impact by constructing social reality, that is, "by framing images of reality…in a predictable and patterned way" (McQuail, 1994, p.331). On the other hand, media effects are limited by an interaction between mass media and audiences. "Media discourse is part of the process by which individuals construct meaning, and public opinion is part of the process by which journalists…develop and crystallize meaning in public discourse" (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989, p.2). At this juncture, we need to understand the roles of mass media and audience in order to better conceptualize agenda setting, framing, and priming. As generally assumed, agenda setting is a challenge to the limited effects theories which dominated until 1960s. It evoked the search for new strong effects along with Spiral of Silence at the same time. Usually, strong effects models emphasize the powerful media and presume passive audiences. If so, should we necessarily regard that agenda setting, framing, and priming have been based on the impression of passive audiences as the Spiral of Silence? It seems that agenda setting, framing, and priming identically presuppose, in fact, that human nature is vulnerable and passive, allowing the mass media to construct public opinion in their way. However, even if mass media have strong effects on their audience, agenda setting, framing, and priming as theories allow for audiences' interaction with the mass media. According to a constructivist media effects model, audiences rely on "a version of reality built from personal experience, interaction with peers, and interpreted selections from the mass media." (Neuman et al., 1992, p.120) Therefore, these interactions and activeness of audiences do not necessarily require the assumption of passive audience to social construction of reality.

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National News Cultures: Towards a Profile of Journalists Using Cross-National Survey Findings

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Mark Deuze is a graduate student at the Amsterdam School of Communications Research (ASCoR), The Netherlands. The issues regarding journalists and the international environment in this paper forms part of a larger research project into contemporary journalism in The Netherlands, a project that runs 1997 to 2001. This project has four main themes: journalism in The Netherlands in terms of [1] an international comparative perspective, [2] the multicultural society, [3] infotainment and [4] the Internet. The author got his BA in Journalism at the Tilburg School for Journalism, The Netherlands and his M.Phil in History and Communication Studies at the Rand Afrikaans University in Johannesburg, South Africa.

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Title: *National News Cultures: Towards a Profile of Journalists Using Cross-National Survey Findings*

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Abstract: This paper compares the main data findings of a survey among Dutch journalists with results from recent projects in more or less similar countries: Germany, Great Britain, Australia and the US. The paper critically discusses existing published cross-national research (based on Weaver and Wilhoit-type of journalism survey projects). The cross-national comparison is used as potentially instrumental in describing a national profile or news culture of journalists (using The Netherlands as a case study).

Title

National News Cultures: Towards a Profile of Journalists Using Cross-National Survey Findings

Introduction

This paper compares the main data findings of a general survey among journalists in The Netherlands with results from recent projects in more or less similar countries: Germany, Great Britain, Australia and the US. For the purpose of comparison a number of publications that featured survey results were used.[1] Differences and commonalities in the findings will be set against the developments of journalism in The Netherlands. Regarding methodology this paper will critically look at existing published cross-national research (based on Weaver and Wilhoit-type of journalism survey projects; for an overview see Weaver, 1998).

The characteristics of journalists will be measured and analyzed subsequent to their relevancy in describing a profile of journalists in The Netherlands in a cross-national comparative framework. Where possible, the data will reflect similar respondents (samples corrected for example regarding freelancers). The central question underlying the analyses in this paper is, to what extent data gathered by a survey of journalists in a particular country used instrumentally in a cross-national comparative design contributes to describing a profile of a 'national news culture': that what can be considered as 'particular' to a national background.

On cross-national comparative research

Comparative journalism research has been quite rare up until the 1990s, with some exceptions such as the 1981 survey of German and British journalists (published in Donsbach, 1983; Koecher, 1986). In the 1990s several projects addressed issues of cross-national comparison of journalists. One could mention for example the 'Media and Democracy'-project of Patterson and Donsbach, which contained mail surveys in the 1991-1993 period among journalists in Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Sweden and the United States (Patterson and

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[1] for Germany work by Schoenbach, Stuerzebecher and Schneider as well as Weischenberg and Scholl, for Great Britain work by Delano and Henningham, for Australia work by Henningham and for the US work by Weaver and Wilhoit (see References for details). The tables used here were checked and verified (through e-mail correspondence during the project from 1997 to 2001) by Armin Scholl (German data), John Henningham

Donsbach, 1996: 457). Another book project one has to mention is the volume on journalism surveys in 21 countries, collected and edited by Weaver (1998). Most of these surveys adopted the survey design and questionnaire of the 1976 project in the US by Johnstone, Slawski and Bowman. Sparks and Splichal ran an earlier similar project by supervising and collecting surveys among journalism students in 22 countries (as reported in 1989 and 1994). In Germany several authors have connected survey research in European countries to cross-national frameworks (see Sievert, 1998; Weischenberg and Sievert, 1998; Esser, 1998). The underlying consideration is the notion, that results from a single country make more sense when compared with findings from other countries where the same methodology was used (Edelstein, 1982). Several scholars have pointed out that comparisons among countries also prevent 'ethnocentrism'. McMane is this respects writes that *"examining another culture can provide us with different ways of looking at ourselves"* (1993: 208). Therefore the examination of survey data from other countries coupled with an understanding of the Dutch context might facilitate a deeper appreciation of what may or may not constitute a profile of journalists in The Netherlands.

Comparative research in journalism is ideal-typically based on similar research designs and methods. The widespread adoption of the Weaver and Wilhoit-framework has been particularly instrumental for comparisons between journalists of different nationalities. Weischenberg and Sievert further signal the prerequisite of functional equivalence between country-specific populations surveyed (1998). This not only demands similar research methods regarding sampling, questionnaire, scaling and statistical analyses of data, but also comparable (elements) of media systems that form the organizational and professional context of journalistic work in the chosen countries. As the individual characteristics of journalists in a given news culture are presented here, an analysis of journalists from countries with more or less extreme macro-level differences in news culture would yield culture specific results instead of allowing for a universal comparison. In other words: considering similarities in professionalization and media history between a set of given national news cultures, could we assume that journalists in those cultures have developed a shared set of characteristics?

(Australian data), Anthony Delano (British data) and David Weaver (US data), for which unconditional and friendly help I am extremely grateful.

Several authors have noted that differences found in descriptive cross-national research can become idiosyncratic and generally appear to be rather ad-hoc without a clearly articulated theoretical idea guiding the comparison (Zhu et al, 1997: 95). Another problem regarding the comparison of cross-national survey data relates to the interpretation of differences. Weaver and Wilhoit in particular have mentioned the pluralism inherent in the answers of journalists, which means that a cross-national comparison cannot be solely based on differences found between single variable results (1996: 141). Without obtaining a complete dataset one cannot determine whether a single variable is indicative of the journalists in that country, or if it is part of a cluster of answers by a particular group of journalists within a country. In fact, most of the published cross-national studies suggest that one is more likely to find variation within a population than between populations of journalists in different countries (Henningham, 1996). Elsewhere, Weaver has correspondingly argued that the patterns of similarities and differences cannot be classified 'neatly' along political or cultural boundaries (1998: 478). Weaver and other authors suggest that influences of professional socialization and media organizations on journalists' self-perceptions are not necessarily a function of national politics or ideology (see also Sparks and Splichal, 1994). A problem that has been signaled specifically related to a comparison between (very) similar countries, is how to explain the general lack of significant differences between journalists from these nationalities. The overall pattern in cross-national journalism survey results (among functionally equivalent countries and research designs) generally suggests what has been described as a *"high degree of attitude homogeneity within the journalistic profession"* (see Donsbach, 1983: 23). This has led some authors to doubt the validity of certain items in the standard questionnaire regarding for example the measurement of role perceptions and ethics of journalists in different countries (Henningham, 1996: 216; Zhu et al, 1997: 94). Another point of critique towards this approach is the somewhat 'exclusive' approach of social scientists towards (statistically significant) differences instead of similarities when analyzing datasets. Following these considerations, one has to use the data from other surveys tentatively and as instrumental in describing a profile of journalists – in the case study of this paper: in The Netherlands.

Selection of Countries

In most cases of cross-national comparative research of journalists, scholars have looked at differences and commonalties between respondents coming from more or less similar countries. The reason for singling out countries with common media systems is that comparing journalists from for example a historically well-established West-European democracy with a 'new' democracy in political and social turmoil such as South Africa or Serbia would show some obvious differences which could be all too easily explained in terms of the societal (and corresponding media cultural) differences of the countries involved. An example thereof is a comparison between journalists from China, Taiwan and the US; Chinese reporters were found to have significantly different views on media roles than their foreign colleagues (Zhu, Weaver, Lo, Chen and Wu, 1997). In this paper the data is used from surveys in The Netherlands, Germany, Great Britain, Australia and the United States, all of which are similar Western democracies with at least a century-old tradition in established media roles in society. Table I shows the sample characteristics in the five countries (index and data based on Weaver, 1998: 4-5).

INSERT TABLE I ABOUT HERE

The surveys in these countries - Western democracies with similar developments in terms of journalism professionalization and modernization - were all conducted in the last decade via phone, using CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) or face-to-face (one of two projects in Germany). The scholars involved worked together (in-) formally with Weaver regarding constructing and wording of the questionnaire, exchanging data and interpreting results. Beyond the similar research methods used, these countries were found to be functionally equivalent in terms of their media systems, history of modernization of journalism in the 20th century and comparable issues under professional debate in recent years (see for overviews and discussion: Merrill, 1995; Delano and Henningham, 1995; Hallin, 1996; Sievert, 1998; Weaver, 1998; Cottle, 2000a). Data is taken from chapters in Weaver (1998) and through personal correspondence with researchers involved. The sample characteristics (see Table I) suggest that the five samples are at least similar (and comparable) in terms of their respective sizes and structures, even though one finds already quite significant differences in these characteristics (such as median age and education levels of journalists).

Survey methodology

The main issue to address in our definition of journalists is its appropriateness to use as a means for comparison with data findings from survey studies in the selected countries. Such other survey studies have - with exception in Germany and Great Britain where freelance journalists were also interviewed - focused rather exclusively on 'hardcore' mainstream news journalism, as in full-time reporters and editors working for 'classical' media types - newspapers, 'quality' public interest magazines, broadcast news programs and general news (wire) services (Scholl, 1996 and 1997). Our definition therefore has to be both similar as well as inclusive, so that the data gathered can be used effectively for cross-national comparisons when cases are selected which are 'functionally equivalent', as Weischenberg and Sievert noted in a comparison between German and French journalism survey results (1998: 397).

For the general sample design the address book of the Dutch national organization of journalists - the *Nederlandse Vereniging voor Journalisten* (NVJ) - was used. Approximately two-thirds of Dutch journalists are members of the NVJ (Van Gaalen-Oordijk et al, 1993). The available literature does not suggest that one may expect significant differences in survey findings among organized and non-organized media professionals, although journalism professionalization is generally seen as partly dependent on a degree of (self-) organization (Beam, 1990; see Vasterman and Aerden, 1995: 18-19 for The Netherlands). A specific advantage of using the NVJ database was the fact that it contained a vast number of freelancers, which group of journalists can be seen as being highly organized in The Netherlands. Our net sample consisted of 1.151 journalists. In total 773 interviews were successfully completed within the time set for the project (September-November 1999 and February 2000). Overall the refusal rate was 1%, the response rate (approx. 900 calls made, 773 completed interviews) was 86%.

Selection of characteristics

The questionnaire followed the structure and design of the examples in the selected countries closely, starting with a series of occupational characteristics and leaving the demographic variables to the end of the interview. The Dutch questionnaire contained 74 items, the American and German lists were somewhat longer: 83 and 87 (not counting many subdivided items). The occupational characteristics offer insight into how journalists work. In total 33 variables (15 nominal, 8 ordinal, 10 ratio) measured tenure, salary, type of media organization, specialization (if any), relationships with colleagues and the audience, use of Internet and mobile phone and daily practices on the job. The next set of questions were dubbed professional characteristics, as these were intended to shed light on how journalists perceive their roles and work in terms of changes and challenges to the profession of journalism. In sum 29 variables (all ordinal) measured images of audience, role perceptions and ethics. The interview concluded with 10 items on so-called 'basic' characteristics – on what journalists bring to the job – regarding age, gender, ethnicity, education, political and religious views, household situation.

Results: Basic Characteristics

Age

The median age of women in Dutch journalism is 36; of men it is 44 years. The median age of Dutch journalists is 42 years - the highest one worldwide, if compared to the data findings elsewhere in the world (see Weaver, 1998: 457). Limited to the scores in the selected countries one finds median ages of: Australia 32, Germany 35, United States 36, Great Britain 38 years.

Gender

In 1968 only some 5% of journalists in The Netherlands were women (Muskens, 1968). In 1976 Kempers and Wieten found 9% women in Dutch journalism (1976: 11). The 1993 survey of Van Gaalen-Oordijk and colleagues reported 20% women in newsrooms; our project sets the general percentage at 32%. Among younger reporters (those who are still in their twenties, n=78) the gender ratio is 46-54 (M/F), 76% of which group entered the profession through a journalism school. This situation is to some extent similar in Germany, where 42% of journalists under 30 are women, set against 34% of other respondents (source: data from 1993 survey, via Armin Scholl). In other countries (see Table I) the situation is somewhat similar, although the British media in particular seem to have been reluctant to hire women.

Ethnicity

Twelve respondents explicitly indicated having a 'non-Dutch' ethnic background, representing 1.6% (hereafter rounded to 2%) of the sample. Of the 12 respondents in question 7 are women. The ethnic make-up of this segment: 1 Turkish, 1 Moroccan, 3 Surinam/Antilles, 3 Indonesian, 4 European (other than Dutch: 1 German, 3 Italian). Beyond concluding that newsrooms in The Netherlands in general do not reflect the multicultural society (with 10% of the 1999 Dutch labor market consisting of people with an ethnic minority background according to the *Centraal Buro voor Statistiek*, CBS: the Dutch central agency for census statistics – see <http://statline.cbs.nl>), one may note the low refusal rate (1%) on this sensitive question; this despite the sensitivity regarding ethnicity in Dutch media (Evers, 2000: 64-65).

The low number of ethnic minority respondents may have been influenced by the fact that this sample only included NVJ members and that the respondents' ethnicity was measured in terms of their self-perception; people might have indicated 'Dutch' when they formally are not in terms of what the government and the literature defines as belonging to an ethnic minority group (cf. being *allochtoon*: all people legally in The Netherlands who are not born there, or have at least one parent who is not born in The Netherlands, see Sterk, 2000: 107-108). The low percentage does correspond with other recent estimates in the literature though, which numbers range from 1% to 4% of journalists in mainstream print and broadcast media (see Suudi, 1991: 14; Ouaj, 1999: 56-59; Sterk, 2000: 97-98). The British survey (held in 1994-1995) reported 1% journalists with a black Caribbean or black African ethnic origin (Delano and Henningham, 1995: 6-7; the United Kingdom had an ethnic minority population of approx. 6% in 1992, see Cottle, 2000b). The journalism surveys in Australia and Germany did not specifically ask for ethnic backgrounds, nor did these projects specifically identify variables in the questionnaire regarding multicultural issues. Weaver and Wilhoit reported 8% journalists in fulltime jobs belonging to racial minorities (as compared to 25% minorities in the national population and to 9% of those ethnic minorities with bachelor degrees, generally seen as a qualification for entering the journalism profession, see 1996: 12; in The Netherlands 3% of ethnic minorities have a BA/MA-level educational background, according to Chorus in *NRC Handelsblad*, 17 February 2001).

Education

As noted in CBS reports, the standard of education among young people in The Netherlands is quite high and continues to rise: people spend more time in (higher) education than in the past. Half of the respondents reported having studied on an HBO-level (32% thereof in journalism), 39% has a university-level education (nine people finished a university course in journalism in Groningen or Rotterdam, another nine journalists graduated in communications).[2] A vast majority of Dutch and American journalists hold a BA or MA degree (resp. 79% and 82%), compared with Germany (65%), Great Britain (49%) and Australia (35%). In general it seems clear that, like in the US, a bachelor's degree is the minimum qualification necessary for entering journalism in The Netherlands (see Weaver and Wilhoit, 1998: 402). Australia and Great Britain are clear exceptions to this rule, though; both countries seem to rely more on 'on the job' training rather than institutional education (Gaunt, 1990).

Political leanings

Like journalists virtually everywhere, Dutch reporters seem to be quite left-leaning in their political self-perception: a majority said they considered themselves politically leaning "a little to the left" (47%) or even "pretty far to the left" (31%). On the other hand, many respondents indicated during the interview that they felt the 'left/right'-distinction has become quite inappropriate to measure personal views regarding ideology or politics; these journalists argued that one could easily be both left and right at the same time.[3] A nationwide survey among Dutch journalists in 1976 showed that all reporters had specific party preferences - mostly leaning towards the left - at the time, suggesting that in terms of political leanings nothing much has changed since (Kempers and Wieten, 1976). Yearly CBS-polls regarding potential voting behavior of the Dutch population suggest that there is much more of a balance between party preferences to the left and right of the political spectrum among the public than among journalists ('leftwing' parties such as PvdA, D66, GroenLinks and SP receiving 38% support, 'rightwing' organizations like VVD, CDA and several smaller religious parties also scoring a total of 38%, source: CBS Statline, poll of 1999).

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[2] HBO in The Netherlands stands for higher professional education, equivalent to a bachelors degree; on the university level a degree is more or less equal to a masters' degree – both typical Dutch systems which are to be replaced by the international BA/MA system by 2002 or 2003.

[3] This point of critique did not prevent them from answering the question and position themselves quite clearly; this item had a 4% refusal rate.

Henningham (1998) shows that Australian journalists are significantly more liberal-progressive than the general public, in particular when it comes to social issues such as sexual freedoms, ethnic diversity and welfare spending. Survey results from the selected countries indeed suggest that media professionals generally position themselves in the center or center-left of the political spectrum.

Conclusions on Basic Characteristics

To what extent has the comparison of basic characteristics offered insights into 'national' news cultures? Dutch journalists are the 'oldest', which can partly be attributed to the fact that commercial broadcast media only entered the market in the early 1990s and started news operations only a couple of years ago. As the influx of new, younger journalists in recent years has been mainly in the broadcast sector, this seems to be an area that is particular to the Dutch context. The gender ratio among younger journalists is particular skewed in Great Britain, which may have to do with the fact that British media are more inclined to train people on the job instead of recruiting straight from schools and colleges (like in the US and The Netherlands, of which students women have been the majority in the last decade or so). The Dutch and American journalism education systems – although having a different historical foundation – are much more similar (in terms of BA/MA structures and skills/theory based learning for example) than the Commonwealth system – with Germany traditionally not having practice-based journalism education institutes. This perhaps accounts for the high (and similar) numbers of graduates among Dutch and US reporters.

The issue of ethnic minority representation has been on the agenda in The Netherlands for at least two decades, as it has in the US (Campbell, 1998; Sterk, 2000). This explains the fact why US (and Dutch) scholars discuss the issue of numbers of minority reporters in such detail. In Germany, Great Britain and Australia it seems to be much more of a discussion on racism in the media (coverage), which might be related to the fact that migrants have only entered those countries relatively recently (Cottle, 2000b). The political leanings of reporters show particular congruence across national boundaries, which suggests that having a 'left' (or perhaps: progressive, social-democratic) self-perception is something which can be expected of the 'ideology' related to being a newsmedia professional in a Western democracy (see Reese, 2001).

Results: Occupational Characteristics

In this section characteristics concerning the workplace and labor situation are reported. Specifically we will look at the distribution among media organizations, types of work and job profiles, relationships with peers and publics and whether today's journalists want to stay in the profession.

Media distribution

The distribution across media types of journalists shows that most journalists (as defined by the NVJ) work for traditional media, (regional) newspapers in particular. The month after completing our survey the NVJ in fact started a special branch for Internet-based reporters, after which many of these 'new' journalists joined the organization as members. Since commercial radio organizations in The Netherlands generally do not offer news, nor do they have specific newsdesks (with one or two exceptions), few journalists from this sector are present in our sample. A similar situation exists for the relatively few and 'young' existing commercial regional broadcasters (all of which have starting broadcasting only in recent years). As is the conclusion in other countries, the bulk of Dutch journalists is concentrated in the print media.

Job descriptions

The distribution of job descriptions shows a varied picture: 11% work in the upper echelons of the profession (editors-in-chief, supervisors, heads of newsdesks and so on), 12% are editors, 63% considered themselves to be reporters. This leaves 14% (n=106) 'other' job descriptions, which are difficult to categorize in either section. The 1993 survey of Dutch journalists correspondingly found that the formal job profile – laid down in contracts as in editor, sub editor, reporter or correspondent – does not necessarily correctly describe the kind of functions journalists have in the media organization, which are more likely to be determined by informal practices and hierarchy in the newsroom (Van Gaalen-Oordijk et al, 1993: 19). The high variety in descriptions offered by the respondents suggests a further functional differentiation within the profession of journalism, which has also been observed in for example the German surveys (Weischenberg and Scholl, 1998). The job profiles offered by German and Dutch journalists suggests that the Dutch newsroom has a similar 'open' organization, as compared to for example British or US newsrooms where different tasks are generally more strictly divided between what Weaver and Wilhoit describe as four 'profiles of newswork': reporters, photojournalists, upper and lower level news managers (1996: 56-60). The Dutch and German journalists therefore can been seen as being more 'holistic' in their work, while Anglo-Saxon journalists seem to be much more tied to a certain functional discipline (Esser, 1998).

Freelance

The International Federation of Journalists released the report *"Freelance Futures"* in December 1999, which survey among 130 journalism organizations and associations in 98 countries worldwide showed that approximately 23% of journalists in Europe are working in a freelance capacity (the proportion in Africa is 20% and in Latin America about 48%, source: IFJ, 1999). In The Netherlands this percentage matches perfectly: 23% (n=176) of all respondents work as freelancers. About half (56%) of this group works on a contract-per-assignment basis. Freelance journalists in The Netherlands tend to be more specialized than their colleagues (77% against 53%) and generally work for more than one employer, particularly in the print magazine sector. On average, freelance journalists have been in journalism for 16 years, in which time they have had at least 18 different employers. The IFJ report further concluded that the freelance sector continues to grow as a proportion of the total journalism community (IFJ, 1999: 5). Most journalism surveys did not include freelancers in their sampling design – mainly because of the fact that these reporters can be hard to reach and are considered to be 'unorganized', but also because of research design replication concerns (David Weaver, in personal e-mail communication, February 2001). The IFJ study shows that at least half of all European freelancers belong to some kind of journalism union or association, which suggests that approaching them through an organization like the Dutch NVJ can be successful in obtaining at least a large portion of freelancers in the total sample.

In our selection of countries the US and Australian surveys did not include freelancers and focused solely on fulltime editorial or news people (Weaver and Wilhoit, 1996: 247). The British survey reportedly included freelancers, claiming that such engagements have become widespread *"even in the mainstream"* (Delano and Henningham, 1995: 26). Delano reported 20% freelancers in his sample of British journalists. From the IFJ report one can conclude that approximately 11% of journalists in Australia are freelancers (1999: 28). The situation in the US is somewhat difficult to assess, since the National Writers Union, which union exclusively represents freelancers, has claimed that this figure is unknown – although the IFJ report estimates a minimum of at least 10% (ibid., 41). Weaver and Wilhoit did not include, nor did they even mention freelance journalists in their 1996 overview of the three major US journalism surveys of 1976, 1982 and 1992 (see 1996: 247-251 on definition and sample).

Specialists vs. Generalists

Journalists were asked whether they have a specific area, topic or 'beat'. The overall score shows that 59% of journalists indeed has such a specialization – although it is unclear whether they are in fact able to pursue those specific interests in their daily work. The print media in particular employ specialists: 66% of newspaper and magazine staffers are specialized against 44% of broadcast people. As noted before, freelance journalists are the most specialized news people. The specific beats mentioned show that women are most likely (64%) to be specialized in health and lifestyle issues and that men dominate the sports (96%), crime (86%) and new media (87%) beats. This finding corresponds with the results of a study 15 years ago among women in newspaper journalism, indicating that nothing much has changed since in terms of gender stereotypical beats (Diekerhof et al, 1986). Twelve respondents mentioned issues related to the multicultural society (for example ethnic minorities, racism, immigrants and asylum seekers) as their specialization. Additional analyses show that minority journalists are more likely to work in 'minority beats' (such as news about their 'homeland', asylum seekers, ethnic minority youths in Dutch cities). In the US the data shows a similar pattern: 45% of respondents usually cover a specific 'beat', most of whom work in the print sector of the media. The survey in Germany specifically asked in which department the journalists 'normally' work (20% of journalists polled did not mention a specific department), but where one works does not necessarily has anything to do with which topic one claims to be specialized in. The published data in Australia and Great Britain does not reflect a differentiation in this respect.

Images of Audience

Earlier research in The Netherlands by Kaiser and Wermuth (1989) and the *Instituut voor Strategische Kommunikatie* (ISK, 1994) has shown that (newspaper) journalists have a somewhat ambivalent relationship with their public(s). Although journalists claimed to value readers' comments, they also indicated that they would not change their ways because of public criticism. Both studies indicated that Dutch journalists do not seem to hold their audience in high esteem. As a first step in exploring the images of audience the respondents were asked about what they perceived the main interests of their (intended) public to be. Their answers show that journalists feel their intended public(s) generally want to know about what directly affects them, although there do not seem to be 'common denominators', as in specific audience interests on which all journalists more or less agree upon. Although this question was not used in the US survey, Weaver and Wilhoit did ask journalists whether they felt their audience members are more interested in the day's breaking news than in an analysis; 69% agreed either somewhat or strongly (1996: 77). The Dutch reporters seem to think otherwise, ranking analysis well above immediacy.

Dutch Journalists do not seem to get a lot of feedback on their work from their audience, with one-third of respondents claiming to get regular feedback from members of the public. They also tend not to use e-mail for that particular purpose. The sharp difference between journalists claiming that getting feedback from members of the audience is important and in fact getting any feedback at all is noteworthy: 64% says its important to get feedback, only 34% in fact gets feedback.

Less than half of the reporters feel that it is important to have an influence on public opinion. Surveys in other countries show that journalists in Germany, the United States, Great Britain and Australia all agree that their influence on (the formation of) public opinion is even greater than it should be (Henningham and Delano, 1998: 152). Such findings indicate a strong awareness and sensitivity among journalists about their possible impact on contemporary society, even though the extent of that impact is unclear and one may wonder whether these answers might reflect a negative image of a 'gullible' audience. The American and German researchers went out and asked their respondents respectively if they perceived their audience as "easily fooled" (US journalists: 14% agreed) or as "superficial" (German journalists: 19% agreed) and "badly informed" (German journalists: 14%), indeed suggesting that the majority of journalists in fact claim to take their audience seriously (Weischenberg and Scholl, 1998: 250-251).

Commitment

Profiling a profession on the occupational level generally also entails inquiring about the level of commitment of journalists to their work. The US surveys of 1971, 1982-1983 and 1992 show an increase in 'defectors': 6% wanted to work outside of journalism in the 1970s, rising to 11% in 1980s which percentage again doubled in the 1990s, revealing a decline in job satisfaction (Weaver and Wilhoit, 1996: 111-112). In The Netherlands one-tenth of journalists mentioned they did not see themselves still working in journalism five years from now – but a quarter of this group of 76 respondents mentioned they had to because of pending retirement. The US scholars saw a trend among journalists leaving the profession to move into - better-paid - public relations work; only 30 Dutch journalists (median age: 43) indicated a similar wish for the near future. The question posed to German journalists in 1993 was, whether they had more fun doing journalism in the past than today: 12% said they definitely did (source: data from 1993 survey, via Armin Scholl). Unfortunately no data for Great Britain and Australia has been reported on this particular item. The project at hand did not include other items regarding job satisfaction into the questionnaire, mainly because of the fact that these variables did not generate meaningful results in other surveys of journalists (Weaver, 1998: 461-464).

Conclusions on Occupational Characteristics

To what extent has the comparison of occupational characteristics offered insights into 'national' news cultures? Two important conclusions can be drawn on a general or macro-level of comparison: in the selected countries the (vast) majority of journalists is located in the print media sector (particularly newspapers), and most reporters still feel that the role of the newsmedia is an influential – even perhaps too influential – one in contemporary society. The first conclusion is somewhat surprising if one considers the job potential offered by television in general and online developments in the last decade in particular; the second at least suggests that many professionals in the field have a perspective on media power as a 'dominant' instead of a 'pluralistic' force (see for example McQuail, 1994: 70). One may assume that such a perspective connects to the way they work. The functional differentiation in terms of job descriptions reveals that differences between countries indeed can be found on organizational/occupational level variables, enabling a boundary to be drawn between Anglo-American and European-Continental type newsrooms.

It is unfortunate that several samples did not include either freelance or part-time journalists, as developments in many countries (notably The Netherlands, Germany, Great Britain) suggest that increasing numbers of media professionals (and their employers) work this way.

What turns out to be particularly fruitful in such an inclusive sample is an analysis of gender and racial inequalities, as for example more women and ethnic minorities are found to be working in 'stereotypical' specializations. Inclusive sampling would allow a more detailed study on the position of marginalized groups in journalism. The high number of job 'defectors' in the US is remarkable – as researchers Weaver and Wilhoit note explicitly. Fact is that the public's criticism of the US media in their coverage of issues like the Gulf War, the O.J Simpson trial, the Clinton/Lewinksy scandal and last but not least the Presidential elections of 2000 may affect issues pertaining to job satisfaction and status even further in the US (see for example Freedom Forum, 1999). This is a point of attention for researchers elsewhere, as media critics and members of the public – also through the World Wide Web – are becoming more 'vocal' in their critique of today's newsmedia (Boylan, 2000).

Results: Professional Characteristics

Concluding the data report in this section the professional characteristics of journalists are described and analyzed: the attitudes, norms and values of journalists as they relate to their daily work. Reported here are answers of journalists regarding role perceptions and ethics of newsgathering methods.

Role perceptions

An indicator of the way journalists see their function in society is to ask them, how important they rate a number of possible media roles (Weaver and Wilhoit, 1996: 133-147). A list of such roles was originally constructed by US scholars Johnstone, Slawksi and Bowman in their national survey of 1971 to address the professional views of journalists. The Americans concluded at the time that the professional group could be divided between those favoring 'neutral' and 'participant' roles, although most respondents considered both roles important (see Johnstone et al, 1976).

INSERT TABLE II ABOUT HERE

Table II shows the percentage of journalists rating the various roles as very important in the selected countries. Some of the functions were not asked about in all countries. Topping the charts in all countries is the combination of an orientation towards explaining the news with quickly getting the news 'out there'. Especially the American surveys in the last decades show that the interpretive function of journalists is becoming more popular as time goes by. Although most countries do not have a similar history of longitudinal surveys among journalists, the available literature (notably collected in Weaver, 1998) suggests that this conclusion can be drawn for all countries. This perhaps explains to some extent why 'providing analysis' scores even higher than 'getting the news quickly' in The Netherlands: our survey was held in 1999-2000, the most recent one before that date has been the one in Great Britain of 1995 (see the sample characteristics as reported in Table I).

All in all the Dutch (and the German) journalists did not seem to feel comfortable with choosing the 'very important' category as their answer to the various questions. Adding the 'important' with the 'very important' category (on a 5-point scaled question), several differences stand out more clearly. Seen in this light and reporting those scores with which Dutch journalists differ substantially from their international colleagues, it seems clear that the reporters in The Netherlands not only want to reach as many people as possible (71%), but also want to inform them in a particularly 'adversary'-like fashion (81%). Not only are Dutch journalists watchdogs of 'traditional' domains like government and (big) businesses (81%), they also seem to be quite keen to keep abreast of the latest trends (72%) in society at large. Half of the Dutch journalists (49%) seem to feel that providing entertainment is an important role of the media.

The pattern of distribution in the five Western democracies is largely similar, although several scores differ to some extent. An earlier cross-national comparison of journalism survey data by Australian scholar Henningham also reached the conclusion, that the relative rankings of various roles among journalists in his country and the US are similar (1996: 212). Particularly the British reporters have opted quite clearly for a critical-analytical (or: 'interpretive') role. British scholar Delano expressed his surprise over the fact that more British journalists accepted the importance of providing entertainment over being a constantly skeptical 'public adversary' (1995: 17). Dutch and German journalists do not feel that their most important function is to be a 'watchdog' of the government. On the other hand, these were the only two countries where 'standing up for the disadvantaged in society' was perceived to be a valid media role to inquire about – and which received support of at least one-tenth of all respondents. Perhaps journalists in these Western-European democracies define the 'ideological' role of being a watchdog in terms of a 'pro-people' perception, rather than an 'anti-government' stance. Especially Australian and British reporters rated this adversary role high, suggesting a 'Commonwealth' tradition in journalism (Koecher for example coined British journalists as being *"bloodhounds"* in an earlier project, see 1986: 63).

Weaver and Wilhoit used set combinations of media roles to interpret this particular range of questions, using material from previous studies as hypotheses (1996: 137ff). The various items were grouped and assessed to what extent these would provide support for either an interpretative, a disseminator, an adversarial and a 'populist mobilizer' role. The scholars found that journalists do not fit these categories anymore in the 1990s and therefore called the American reporters pluralistic in their role perceptions. In fact, such pluralism seems to be the 'key' to understanding journalists' views on themselves and their professional role in society (1996: 141).

Ethics

Table III in this section on the professional characteristics of journalists describes to what extent respondents agree with a certain range of newsgathering methods. Ethics can be seen as being part and parcel of (journalism) professionalism and are part of almost all curricula of journalism education programs worldwide (see Gaunt, 1992; Weaver and Wilhoit, 1996: 152). Furthermore, one could argue that the existence of ethical codes is one of the characteristics of a profession (Beam, 1990; Henningham, 1996: 213).

One thing can be said about journalists in The Netherlands: they do not seem to have any problems answering questions regarding the ethics of their reporting practices, as the highest refusal or "don't know" rate for these questions was 1%.

INSERT TABLE III ABOUT HERE

It seems clear from Table III that the practice of so-called 'chequebook journalism' (paying for information) or breaking of the trust-based relationship between a reporter and his or her confidential source is certainly not done among journalists in The Netherlands. Comparing French and American journalists, McMane concluded that journalists from Western industrialized democracies share two values: source anonymity should not be violated and individuals deserve more protection than government or business officials (1993: 216). The evidence in Table III supports her conclusion when it comes to Dutch journalists and their differential stance towards government or business people versus private individuals.

Comparing these countries, one may note a particular exception in case of The Netherlands: Dutch reporters seem to have relatively fewer problems with badgering (unwilling) news sources. Quite a few respondents commented that this in fact is 'the essence of the job' to do so. This is a somewhat unexpected finding regarding the unwillingness journalists seem to share regarding the invasion of one's privacy. It could be that journalists differentiate in their answers between badgering 'public' officials and 'private' individuals as sources of the news. Another finding suggests that this distinction is a clear-cut one for our respondents: almost three-quarters of the sample would use government or business documents without formal permission, while less than one quarter would do the same with personal documents (such as pictures and letters). For most journalists there exists a seemingly paradoxical relationship between active and passive impersonalization - between "lying" and "not telling" (Elliott and Culver, 1992). Most reporters are quite supportive of going 'undercover', as in actively assuming another identity in order to get 'inside' information – a finding that received strongest support in The Netherlands and Great Britain. On the other hand, there are few journalists who would simply not admit to the fact that they are journalists when gathering information for a story. German and American reporters seem to be more apprehensive in opting for either form of deception.

Conclusions on Professional Characteristics

To what extent has the comparison of professional characteristics offered insights into 'national' news cultures? In this respect it may be fruitful – though opportunistic – to look at the five surveys chronologically (starting with the US in 1992/1993, ending with the Dutch survey of 1999/2000) and interpret findings correspondingly. This would suggest that the 'traditional' focus of newsmedia on public institutions like government and businesses might be waning in favor of a more 'private' profile of newswork, with relatively more importance attributed (across the board) to role perceptions like providing relaxation and entertainment, signaling new trends (not asked in several countries) and having an influence on the general public – more often as facilitating a kind of 'pursuit of happiness' (which is of course an unalienable right as determined by the US Declaration of Independence), as in helping people to develop their cultural and intellectual interests. Instead of downplaying such a trend or attributing it to increased commercialism and media concentration (see for example Hallin, 1996), this arena of contemporary journalism deserves more scholarly attention. Journalists seem also to have lesser problems in badgering unwilling sources or using private documents (photos, letters) without permission. This 'penetration' of the private lives of individuals (instead of public figures) might also contribute to the signaled heightened criticism of today's newsmedia.

Discussion

A cross-national comparison of findings coming from surveys among journalists in different more or less similar countries yields results, which seem particularly functional in generating new research questions. In this sense cross-national comparisons indeed offer us new ways of looking at ourselves. Beyond methodological limitations and problems regarding translation, culturally and historically determined topics and sensitivities is a wealth of material to be explored. What is particularly missing from such a comparison is an understanding of how the analyzed characteristics are articulated to the kind of storytelling journalists do in their daily work. It is beyond this paper, but scholars should be able to connect certain characteristics of national journal*isms* to the reported characteristics of national journal*ists*. A national news culture can be seen as consisting of the characteristics of its journalists, its journalisms and of its publics, or in other words: its structure and agency in articulation to media types, genres and public perceptions thereof (Van Zoonen, 1998a). This reveals a third omission from the analysis: the readers, listeners, viewers and surfers. Communication research tells us that the interplay and interconnectedness of senders and receivers – and more importantly: their dynamic roles in the intermediary function of the media – both serving as encoders and decoders of information determines what we see and believe as constituting 'news'.

Beyond the wider implications of these remarks we can look at the admittedly restricted conclusions on the three levels of analysis offered in this paper insofar these offer insight into a national profile of journalists. For this purpose one may evaluate those findings that suggest some kind of 'universality' or essentialist 'particularity' in the characteristics of journalists.

In this respect one can consider on a basic level: skewed gender and ethnic ratios on the work floor and a relatively high level of education. This suggests that one could consider educational systems and newsroom hiring practices a prime area for explanatory variables (see for example recent studies by Bierhoff, Deuze and De Vreese, 2000 and Gaunt, 1992 on journalism education and Becker, Lauf and Lowrey, 1999 on hiring practices regarding ethnic minorities).

On the occupational level the predominance of the print media sector in the selected countries must be mentioned, as well as the 'dominance' view on the influential role of newsmedia in society a majority of journalists reportedly share. This indeed suggests that one should delve deeper into perceptions of media influence, how these take shape and to what extent these can be seen as socially, culturally or professionally constructed. An alternate route is to look specifically for 'pluralist' views on the role of the newsmedia, of which the literature suggests these can be found among new media professionals or rather: online journalists (see Singer, 1998; Deuze, 1999) as well as among journalists working in 'popular' news genres such as tabloids or talk shows (often excluded from sampling designs, see for example Bird, 1990; Cottle, 2000a). A second aspect to be considered is the effect of labor organization and functional differentiation (in terms of job descriptions) on news culture, as distinct patterns and differences were found in this respect between Anglo-American and European-Continental type newsrooms (see Esser, 1998).

Finally, on a professional level, the cross-national comparison – when considered in a longitudinal perspective – at least suggests that a fixation on journalists in terms of their Habermasian role and potential in 'the public sphere' is too narrow-minded for a comprehensive, up-to-date study of newsmedia professionals in contemporary society. Journalism today is also about offering people glimpses of alternate lifestyles and trends, of providing resources for further development and making choices beyond which political candidate to choose. Journalism in Western societies, in other words, seems to be divided between an empirically well-established public function as political-economical watchdog and an 'understudied' private function as service-oriented companion. Investigations in the latter field are more often located in 'extreme' categories (such as the supermarket tabloids, see Bird, 1990; or gossip press, see Van Zoonen, 1998b) or in ideologically delineated genres like 'civic' journalism (Schudson, 1999). Yet the data comparison suggests perceptions on media roles and ethics are shifting throughout the profession, articulating 'public' and 'private' functions with all types of journalists, regardless of beat, media type, genre or affiliation. This certainly deserves more specific and inclusive scholarly attention.

Table I

Sample characteristics in selected countries

Characteristics	Netherlands	Australia	Germany*	USA	Great Britain
Time of survey	1999-2000	1992	1993	1992	1995
Interview method	phone	phone	face-to-face	phone	phone
# Respondents (*N*)	773	1.068	1.498	1.156	726
% Female	32	33	31	34	25
Median age	42	32	35	36	38
# Years in journalism (*mean*)	16	13	10	12	17
College educated	79	35	65	82	49

* Since most tables report the data from the Weischenberg and Scholl survey, their sample characteristics are reported here. Where data from the previous (1992-1993) survey in Germany by Schoenbach et al is reported, relevant details are mentioned in the text.

Table II

Journalists' role perceptions (% saying "very/extremely important")

Media role	Netherlands	Australia	Germany	United States	Great Britain
	N=773	*N=1.068.*	*N=1.498*	*N=1.156*	*N=726*
Provide analysis and interpretation	44	71	39	48	83
Get news to the public quickly	43	74	40	69	88
Be an adversary of public/business officials*	37	30	15	21	51
Give people a chance to express their views	29	-	13	48	56
Reach widest possible audience	26	38	17	20	45
Investigate claims government	25	81	12	67	88
Signaling new trends	18	-	16	-	-
Develop intellectual/cultural interests public	15	37	20	18	30
Stand up for the disadvantaged	13	-	17	-	-
Provide entertainment	11	28	19	14	47
Exert influence on public/political agenda**	9	-	6	5	13
Provide a good Umfeld for advertisers	5	-	-	-	-

* Being adversary is seen as a general role here; in non-Dutch surveys this question was split between officials and businesses – the highest score (differences were minimal) is reported here.

** The US and British surveys asked *"To set the political agenda"*.

Table III
Acceptance of various reporting practices in selected countries (% saying "might be justified")

Reporting practice	NL *N=773*	Australia *N=1.068*	Germany *N=1.498*	USA *N=1.156*	GB *N=726*
Go undercover to gain inside information	79	46	54	36	80
Use business/gov't documents without permission	73	79	54	60	86
Badger or harass news sources	67	55	12	49	59
Using hidden camera/microphone	50	-	53	63	73
Use private documents without permission	29	39	11	17	49
Paying for information	27	13	41	20	65
Claim to be someone other than a journalist	27	13	45	22	47
Reveal a confidential source	6	4	10	5	9

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Civic Journalism in the 2000 U.S. Senate Race in Virginia

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ABSTRACT

Civic Journalism in the 2000 U.S. Senate Race in Virginia

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The Norfolk *Virginian-Pilot* is a proponent of civic journalism; the Richmond *Times-Dispatch* is not. Content analysis of the papers' coverage of Virginia's 2000 U.S. Senate election reflected the divergent newsroom philosophies. The *Times-Dispatch* stories were more likely to be triggered by campaign-managed events, to focus on the election "horse race" and to use political establishment sources. *The Pilot*'s stories were more likely to result from independent or enterprise reporting, to address issues and to use "real people" sources.

Civic Journalism in the 2000 U.S. Senate Race in Virginia

Objective

This paper compares coverage of last fall's U.S. Senate race in Virginia by the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* and Norfolk-based *Virginian-Pilot* to see if their divergent journalism philosophies made a difference in their news stories. *The Virginian-Pilot* is a well-known proponent of "public" or "civic" journalism,[1] a relatively new and controversial approach to covering news, while the *Times-Dispatch* adheres to a traditional approach to journalism. The Senate race presents a unique opportunity to see how these representatives of different strains of journalism cover the same important, complex and high-profile event.

The Philosophical Basis for Civic Journalism

In the late 1980s, several editors, commentators and media critics began to question the traditional values and practices that have guided print journalism in the United States for at least the past half century. They argued that the ritualistic adherence to values embodied in the journalistic concept of "objectivity" has resulted in journalism that is largely reactive; driven by events; dominated by conflict, crisis and scandal; oriented toward political, social and economic elites; and increasingly distasteful and irrelevant to large numbers of the public.

These critics said such journalism has turned off both readers and voters: that it has been responsible for the decline in newspaper circulation over the past several decades and, more importantly, for the apparent alienation of increasing numbers of the public from the American political system. Arthur Charity writes, for example, that veteran journalists "were troubled by the low quality of much of their own work [and] by evidence that the public they had intended to serve distrusted newspapers and increasingly didn't even read them. Most importantly, they saw that the very problems they had come to journalism to help solve still weren't being solved, or even being very intelligently addressed" (1995, p.1).

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[1] For the most part, the terms "public" and "civic" journalism are used interchangeably in the research and commentary on the subject. We will use "civic journalism" here, except in quoted material.

The proposed solution, then, is civic journalism. Jay Rosen has defined it as "an approach to the daily business of the craft that calls on journalists to 1) address people as citizens, potential participants in public affairs, rather than victims or spectators; 2) help the political community act upon, rather than just learn about, its problems; 3) improve the climate of public discussion, rather than simply watch it deteriorate; and 4) help make public life go well, so that it earns its claim on our attention" (Rosen, 1999, p. 22).

An intellectual basis for civic journalism is found in the work of Jurgen Habermas and John Dewey. Habermas is a German scholar whose ideas concerning public opinion have become widely infused in a number of social science disciplines in recent decades. He theorizes the development of a "public sphere," a metaphorical "space" in which free public discourse can take place. Communications media developed in this space and served to expand it, feeding democratic impulses and democratic institutions. Thus, communication processes are key to the development and maintenance of the public sphere and to democratic discourse and processes.

Proponents of civic journalism argue that in recent years, the news media have not supported this public sphere; rather, they have contributed to its degradation. Civic journalists argue that if this slide is to be reversed, journalism must change its ways to provide the public with information that is more useful, more relevant to public problems, more encouraging of civil and productive discourse, and more inclusive of diverse perspectives.

Dewey, a philosopher of democratic ideals of the 1920s and 1930s, said that a fully informed public "would emerge only if politics, culture, education and journalism did their jobs well" (Merritt and Rosen, 1995). Rosen (1999) summarizes Dewey's approach to journalism this way:

> The newspaper of the future will have to rethink its relationship to all the institutions that nourish public life, from libraries to universities to cafes. It will have to do more than "cover" these institutions when they happen to make news. It will have to do more than print their advertisements. The newspaper must see that its own health is dependent on the health of dozens of other agencies which pull people out of their private worlds. …
>
> Every town board session people attend, every public discussion they join, every PTA event, every local political club, every rally, every gathering of citizens for whatever cause is important to the newspaper – not only as something to cover, but as the kind of event that makes news matter to citizens (p. 20).

Practitioners of Civic Journalism

Researchers generally consider the *Wichita Eagle* the first newspaper to engage in civic journalism. Like many journalists, Davis Merritt, the *Eagle*'s editor, was concerned about the low turnout and voter participation in the 1988 presidential election. So in directing the coverage of the 1990 Kansas gubernatorial campaign, Merritt adopted a civic journalism approach: The *Eagle* used focus groups and public forums to create a citizen agenda to guide election coverage, rather than let it be managed and manipulated by politicians and campaign strategists. To promote public participation, the newspaper invited ordinary people to question the candidates – and even held a voter registration drive in its lobby.

Civic journalism gained momentum in 1992 when *The Charlotte Observer* teamed with the local ABC affiliate, WSOC-TV, to cover that year's elections from the citizens' perspective. In 1993, the Pew Center for Civic Journalism was established to promote this emerging newsroom philosophy. The center gave news organizations grants to launch civic journalism experiments and presented awards for the best projects. (The Batten Awards are named for the late James Batten, who as chairman of Knight-Ridder Inc. was an early proponent of civic journalism.)

Competition for the grants and awards reflects growing interest in civic journalism. The number of grants increased from three in 1994 to 16 this year. Overall, the Pew Center has funded more than 100 civic journalism projects involving more than 200 news organizations. (A project typically involves a newspaper partnering with a television station, radio station, online operation or other organization.) Entries in the Batten Awards contest rose from 90 in 1997 to 116 last year.

Newspapers of all sizes have done civic journalism. *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, the nation's sixth largest daily newspaper with a Sunday circulation of about 800,000, shared the Batten Award last year for "Citizen Voices '99," a yearlong "civic dialogue" about the city's mayoral election. The *Dallas Morning News* (circulation 785,000), *San Francisco Chronicle* (circulation 570,000) and *Seattle Times* (circulation 500,000) have received Pew grants to conduct civic journalism experiments. And the *Baltimore Sun* (circulation 475,000) shared the Batten Award in 1998 for a campaign to improve elementary students' reading skills. But most of the newspapers recognized for practicing civic journalism are much smaller. They include at least 15 papers with circulations between 100,000 and 300,000 – such as the *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, the *Dayton Daily News*, the *Wisconsin State Journal* and the Spokane, Wash., *Spokesman-Review*. More than 30 newspapers with circulations below 100,000 also have received Pew grants or Batten Awards. These publications include the *Bradenton Herald* in Florida, the *Anniston Star* in Alabama, the *Bronx Journal* in New York, the *Lewiston Morning Tribune* in Idaho and the *La Grande Observer* in Oregon.

Civic journalists have taken on a variety of topics, from downtown development to public safety. In doing so, they have emphasized not just exposing social problems but engaging readers in the search for solutions. For example, the *Savannah Morning News* in Georgia shared the Batten Award last year for its use of community forums, polls, focus groups and Web interaction for a yearlong series about the community's aging population. In 1998, the *Portland Press Herald* and *Maine Sunday Telegram* mobilized study circles on alcohol abuse, and the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* organized book clubs and discussion groups on poverty and welfare reform.

Civic journalism also has found its way into university curricula. Killenberg and Dardenne, for example, have changed the title of their course at the University of South Florida from "Advanced Public Affairs Reporting" to "News Coverage of Public Life." They write:

> Stories most often found in the daily newspaper or on the evening newscast reinforce prevailing mainstream thinking because they frequently come from traditional, official sources, or they use scattered comments from people with whom journalists have spent too little time. Our students, like many practicing journalists, find it difficult to break away from rounding up the "usual suspects" and getting a quick quote from a bystander. Such conventional journalism is easy and efficient because official sources are accessible, usually comfortable dealing with the press and therefore often quotable, and authoritative and credible, at least to a journalist (1997, 52-53).

Critics of Civic Journalism

Many civic journalism efforts have met heated resistance from journalism traditionalists. They maintain that civic journalists become far too involved in the issues they are covering; that they participate in and create news, instead of dispassionately observing and chronicling it; and that they place reporters in the position of being community boosters and issue cheerleaders. In short, traditionalists argue that civic journalism advocates have abandoned a cherished value of journalism – objectivity. Journalists of all stripes might agree that American politics and society may be going to hell in a hand basket. But while civic journalists believe they should step in and try to stop the slide, traditionalists say journalism's role is to chronicle the descent as thoroughly and objectively as possible. As a former executive editor of *The New York Times* and critic of civic journalism wrote, "Leave reforms to the reformers" (Frankel, in Rosen, p. 220).

Many critics from the newspaper business also have dismissed civic journalism, ironically, as simply "good, solid journalism." They have argued that the best way to improve journalism is to simply do it better! Thoughtful traditional journalists are not particularly satisfied with the current performance of their colleagues. However, they say this is because journalists have strayed *too far* from traditional norms and practices, not because they are sticking too closely to them. Robert J. Haiman, in a *Newspaper Research Journal* commentary titled, "Hey editors: Just stop the nonsense," lists nine "wrongs" with journalism. He writes, for example, "Attention all journalists: Stop using anonymous sources. Just stop it! Stop letting yourself be spun by the spin doctors. Stop letting yourself be used by the leakers. Stop picking up the anonymously-sourced stories of others. Stop the speculation and the unfounded conclusions and the gossiping and the rumor-mongering" (p. 3). He also admonishes journalists, "Stop being celebrities and clowns and capitalists." To publishers, general managers and executives of journalism organizations, he says, "Stop being so mindlessly focused on slashing resources to news departments and so brutally determined to increase profits. Stop paying young reporters such niggardly salaries that some have to live near the poverty line. Stop exploiting broadcast students by offering only unpaid internships" (p. 5).

Some critics of civic journalism have persuasively argued that much of what is wrong with modern journalism can be traced directly to this last point – that the new corporate owners of newspapers and broadcast outlets have slashed budgets to the point that newsrooms are chronically understaffed. It follows that an overworked reporter on a deadline may be particularly likely to craft a story quoting the "usual suspects" easily reached by phone rather than head out the door to a civic association meeting, shopping mall, beauty salon or street corner.

Rosemary Armao, a former president of Investigative Reporters and Editors Inc. and a self-described "refugee from public journalism," blames any current "disconnect" between journalists and the public on "MBA management types." She adds that if a newsroom is adequately staffed, the reporters will be able to find out what the public is thinking. "We were a part of the community and we were read. And then the MBAs started coming into our newsrooms and they cut the number of reporters, and they cut the amount of space they had in the newspaper. And, whoa, now we're unconnected from our public" (in Corrigan, p. 116).

Although civic journalism's "theory" has been widely studied and promoted in academia, it also has come under considerable fire from scholars. They have argued that:

1) Civic journalism is based on unwarranted assumptions about the nature and function of public discourse in democracy.
2) It is unclear if public discourse and the resulting political processes actually are in such precipitous decline.
3) If they are in decline, there are multiple causes, with journalism's alleged misdeeds perhaps not the major one.
4) Civic journalism exhibits a simplistic understanding of the role mainstream journalism has played in the past in encouraging constructive public discourse.

Illustrating several of these points, Pauly (1999) notes, "In particular, public journalism continues to work with a truncated account of the origins of journalism's crisis, a dubious sense of the daily newspaper's exceptional role in American public discourse, and an overly rationalized conception of the social relations that democracy requires" (p. 139). In addition, he writes, "To read the literature on public journalism, one would think that Americans always embrace democracy, that the press always supports the common good, and that all that remains is to revive a tradition of solidarity that has only recently disappeared" (p. 145).

The underlying purpose of civic journalism, according to Glasser (1999), seems to be procedural: to promote democratic processes while not promoting any particular outcome – i.e., to be a fair-minded referee of sorts. It assumes a basic fairness, civility and adherence to certain values in the public that could come to the fore, if only journalism could set aside its fixation on crime, scandal, violence and conflict. Civic journalism advocates make much of a poll conducted for the Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press (1994) showing that most Americans believe the news media are a hindrance to solving problems. However, Glasser proposes the following paradox of civic journalism: "It fails, specifically, to address the predicament newsrooms face, to take an uncomfortably familiar scenario, whenever communities act intolerantly. What does a 'fair-minded' press do when a community consensus calls for a book burning? What is an appropriate response from a 'fair-minded' press when a popular vote yields a racist mayor?" (1999, p. 9)

As Pauly (1999) and others have also pointed out, the mainstream commercial press has not always been the champion of democracy. Pauly writes that the United States has been in a process of *becoming* a democracy over the two and a quarter centuries of its existence, with each gain the result of hard-fought, sometimes violent, battles. The mainstream commercial press has not always, or even often, been on the progressive side, and has often been perceived as the enemy by those seeking to expand the franchise, to protect and expand civil liberties, and to enhance society's tolerance for diversity.

Evaluating Civic Journalism's Impact

After about a decade of experiments and activities said to reflect the characteristics and philosophy of civic journalism, what impact has it had? As numerous commentators have noted, it is not always clear what civic journalism is; therefore, it is difficult to know it when one sees it. Some of its promoters have even disavowed some of the activities done in its name. The clearest measure of outcome would be in the news content itself, since civic journalism's stated purpose is to reform journalism. This would involve changing the "culture" of journalism as reflected in everyday coverage, not just special "civic journalism projects." This culture is hard to change, given the entrenched ways of many journalists and their often open hostility to what they perceive to be civic journalism. Meyer puts it very plainly as follows:

> If the desired end result of public journalism is increased social capital, and if that result is achieved, it ought to surface somewhere in the observable world. A necessary first step for empiricists is to prove that there are any results of public journalism at all. Such proof might come in three progressive steps: 1) Is public journalism real? 2) If so, does it have any visible output? 3) If it does, do those outputs make any difference in the minds, hearts, or observable behavior of the citizenry? (1998, p. 258).

Meyer presents five operationalizations to illustrate what the visible output of civic journalism might be:

- Citizen-based vs. campaign-based sources
- Fewer stories on campaign tactics and strategy and more concerning issues
- Less emphasis on the horse race
- Less emphasis on conflict and more on areas of agreement
- Use of polls to illustrate issues rather than documenting the horse race

A recent study of the degree to which civic journalism has changed the culture of a paper, rather than simply being limited to a particular project, listed a number of the same operationalizations of outcomes that might be expected from civic journalism efforts. Blazier and Lemert (2000) expected that civic journalism efforts in *The Seattle Times* would exhibit the following characteristics, relative to traditional journalism:

1) The sources for news stories will be representatives of citizen organizations or be unaffiliated individuals more often or more prominently.
2) Civic journalism will provide more context, background and history of issues, rather than treating stories as discrete events or episodes.
3) Civic journalism will more often discuss solutions to problems, rather than simply present problems.

4) Civic journalism will more often provide mobilizing information – e.g., information that will facilitate citizen action and involvement.

5) Civic journalism will concentrate less on conflict and more on reasoned debate.

6) Election stories will focus on issues and candidate record, rather than the horse race and candidate character.

Blazier and Lemert were unable to find clear evidence for most of these changes in the everyday news pages of *The Seattle Times*, despite that paper's public adherence to the principles of civic journalism.

The results of a study of Kansas newspapers by McMillan, Guppy, Kunz and Reis were also mixed. They found that the civic journalism newspaper – the *Wichita Eagle* – focused more on issues and candidate records and less on the "horse race," and included a higher frequency of stories with "mobilizing information," compared with the more traditional newspaper, the *Topeka Capital-Journal*. One important hypothesis, that the civic journalism paper would include more citizen and unaffiliated sources, was not supported.

Meyer and Potter (2000), however, found fairly clear evidence that civic journalism makes a difference. They surveyed the political reporters at 20 newspapers chosen to reflect the continuum of papers that support civic journalism to those that do not (they refer to the concept as citizen-based journalism). They followed the survey with content analyses of the political coverage of these newspapers and found that those papers whose political reporting staff expressed the intent to practice citizen-based journalism in the 1996 election were had higher percentages of stories mainly about policy issues and lower percentages of stories with mentions of "horse race" polls.

The Virginian-Pilot and the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*

The Pilot and the *Times-Dispatch* are the two dominant newspapers based in Virginia, each with a quarter-million circulation. The *Times-Dispatch* is the flagship of publicly held Media General Inc. It primarily serves the capital of Richmond, its suburbs and the surrounding Central Virginia region (an area with a population of about 1 million people). The *Times-Dispatch* maintains bureaus throughout Virginia and is considered a statewide paper. *The Pilot* is the flagship of the privately held Landmark Communications Inc. It circulates primarily in South Hampton Roads, including Norfolk, Virginia Beach, Portsmouth and Chesapeake (an area with about 1.1 million people). Both Media General and Landmark own other newspapers throughout Virginia and the Southeast.

The Pilot and the *Times-Dispatch* are well-known within the journalism community as polar opposites on the issue of civic journalism. *The Pilot* was an early adopter of civic journalism and asserts that it has tried to integrate civic journalism into its newsroom culture. The newspaper received a Pew grant in 1996 "to explore the difference between deliberative and market-based polling and use the deeper issues that evolve to frame political coverage" (Pew Center Web site, Projects page). *The Pilot* has complemented its adoption of civic journalism with other changes – for instance, replacing a traditional beat structure with topic teams. While some journalists have praised *The Pilot*'s approach to journalism, others have criticized the paper as faddish (Chambers, 1997). It was *The Pilot* that Rosemary Armao fled.

The *Times-Dispatch* has a reputation for taking a traditional "paper of record" approach to news; its editors have openly criticized civic journalism. "We're not a buzzword company and never will be," said J. Stewart Bryan III, the chairman, president and chief operating officer of Media General (Chambers, 1997). The publisher of the *Tampa Tribune*, a Media General newspaper, has noted that Bryan "is skeptical of what has been called public journalism" (Cunningham, 2000).

The *Times-Dispatch* and *The Virginian-Pilot* have been held up as exemplars of different ways to approach journalism: Charity's textbook did so several years ago in comparing the papers' coverage of then-Governor George Allen's quest for parole reform (Charity, 1995, pp. 41-45). Lambeth describes *The Pilot*'s approach as emphasizing "not projects but day-to-day public framing of issues and storytelling. The focus is on people as citizens and as human beings trying to make civic sense of their public involvements. To meet these goals, the newspaper management created a special 'Public Life Team' of reporters and editors" (1998, p. 20).

Postings on JOURNET, an e-mail discussion list for journalists and journalism faculty members, have underscored the reputations of the *Times-Dispatch* and *The Virginian-Pilot* as solid newspapers with distinct approaches to journalism. In 1998, Christer Lundquist, a Norwegian journalist, was planning a trip to the Eastern United States, wanted to visit local newspapers and asked JOURNET subscribers for suggestions. Bill Chronister, a copy editor at *The Plain Dealer* in Cleveland, suggested visiting, in North Carolina, *The Charlotte Observer* for its public journalism and the *Raleigh News & Observer* for its Internet operations. Then he added: "A bit farther north is the Norfolk *Virginian-Pilot*, another 'hot-bed' of civic journalism. Also in Virginia worth visiting is the more traditional *Richmond Times-Dispatch*."

This difference is clearly reflected in the Meyer and Potter (2000) ratings of 20 newspapers on intent to practice civic journalism (citizen-based journalism, in their terms) in covering the 1996 election. Both the Norfolk and Richmond papers were included in their sample. The *Virginian-Pilot* ranked second in intent to practice civic journalism in this election, while the *Times-Dispatch* ranked 13th.

Hypotheses Regarding Coverage of the 2000 U.S. Senate Race

Assessments of public journalism in practice have been done in a number of cities, but few opportunities have existed to compare competing newspapers covering the same event. One exception is the study, referred to earlier, comparing the Topeka and Wichita papers on local and state election coverage. The fall of 2000 offered a chance to compare how *The Pilot* and the *Times-Dispatch* covered an important, complex and high-profile event: the race for the U.S. Senate between Democratic incumbent Charles Robb and Republican challenger George Allen.

From extensive reading and discussion concerning civic journalism, we can propose the following hypotheses about the two newspapers' campaign coverage:

1) A smaller proportion of total news coverage in *The Pilot* will reflect campaign-managed events than in the *Times-Dispatch*.
2) A smaller proportion of total news coverage in *The Pilot* will focus on the campaign "horse race," process and strategies of candidates than in the *Times-Dispatch*. Conversely, a larger proportion of total news coverage in *The Pilot*, as opposed to the *Times-Dispatch*, will focus on issues, policies and candidates' positions.
3) The number and range of sources will differ in the two newspapers, with a larger proportion of *Times-Dispatch* sources representing political elites than in *The Pilot*. *The Pilot*'s stories may also contain more sources than the *Times-Dispatch*'s stories.

Methodology

All stories relating to the 2000 U.S. Senate race in Virginia were collected between Sept. 2, 2000 – the start of Labor Day weekend, the traditional beginning of the campaign season – and Nov. 8, 2000, the day after Election Day. These stories were collected from the front, metro and Virginia sections of the two newspapers. A few stories were also taken from the Sunday commentary sections; these were generally comparisons of the candidates on issues and their responses to reporters' interviews in Q-&-A format. No editorials, opinion pieces or columns were included. A few stories about the Senate election appeared in other sections, i.e., sports and business. The researchers decided to include only the articles from the general news sections and commentary sections, since these dealt most directly and fundamentally with the campaign. This process produced 95 stories from the *Times-Dispatch* and 120 stories from *The Pilot.*

After a review of previous studies and of a number of stories in this collection, coding schemes for story origin, story content and source type were developed. Story origin, reflecting Hypothesis 1, consisted of three categories: *Campaign/event-driven; Independent/enterprise; Elements of both.* Story content, reflecting Hypothesis 2, also consisted of three categories: *Candidate issues, policies, proposals, attitudes and character; Campaign process, horse race or insider point of view, Elements of both.*

To test Hypothesis 3, each story source was categorized into one of 11 categories, based on the following definitions:

- Campaign/party sources (candidate, campaign spokesperson or operative, political party source, candidate family member)
- Political establishment sources (current or former office holders at local, state or national level; well-known political/public figures)
- Non-elected members of former state or U.S. administrations (state agency head or retired military officers)
- Political pundits, academic sources, think tanks and interest groups (an organization itself or a spokesperson)
- Members of the public made available by the campaign, generally to represent a campaign issue or make a political point
- Unaffiliated members of the public, apparently not connected to the campaign; a "person on the street," perhaps present at a campaign event, but not part of the event's "program"
- Advertisements, including television, radio and print ads and billboards
- Polls
- Government agencies or spokespersons, documents and statistics

- Anonymous sources
- Other

As in the implementation of any coding system, not every story or source seemed to fit cleanly into one category. Rules were established for coding these ambiguous cases. The key factor in coding a story's origin as campaign/event-driven was a "trigger" mentioned in the article. These typically were references to a speech, press conference, meeting, campaign tour or press release generated by a candidate or campaign. Stories were coded as independent/enterprise if they appeared to be the reporter's own idea – not based on an event that "required" coverage in the same sense as a candidate's speech. These articles included analyses of issues; profiles of candidates; "ad watch" stories, in which advertising content was dissected for its veracity; and stories based on government documents, such as campaign spending reports, obtained by journalists. Some stories clearly were triggered by a campaign activity or event, but enough "digging" or independent investigation was done to warrant a code of "elements of both."

In terms of story content, careful decisions were made when an article contained information about both issues/policies and the campaign process/horse race. For example, a story about the release of a poll might include significant content about how the candidates' stances on issues ostensibly were driving the poll numbers. Likewise, many stories started out discussing the mechanics of the campaign – where the candidate was appearing, what he was doing and why – and then reported on the candidate's speech or press conference. In fact, relatively few stories were "pure" – only issue-related, or only about the horse race. However, most articles could be categorized as primarily one or the other. If the content was nearly evenly divided, the story was assigned to the "elements of both" category.

To help clarify these coding decisions, the researchers have included as exhibits two stories published on Oct. 27. Exhibit A is a *Times-Dispatch* story about the latest opinion polls in the Senate race. The story is driven by campaign events (the release of a poll) and focuses exclusively on the campaign process/horse race; it does not mention issues in a significant way. To civic journalism proponents, this story exemplifies a traditional approach to covering politics. Exhibit B is a *Virginian-Pilot* story based on interviews with 56 people from Fairfax to Virginia Beach, in which they discuss the issues that have drawn them to Allen or Robb. This story is based on independent/enterprise reporting and focuses almost entirely on issues. As such, it exemplifies a civic journalism approach to covering politics.

The coding of sources involved the most effort to resolve ambiguity – for example, in the case of an appointed agency head in a former state administration serving as an official in a current Senate campaign. In an instance of this sort, the individual was placed in the code representing his or her current position and/or the code representing the role most closely associated with the campaign. Thus, this person was coded as a "campaign/party source."

Unidentified sources were particularly troublesome. Several stories quoted "a campaign aide" or "an Allen spokesman" or "a Robb staff member," without giving the source's name. In such cases, the source was coded as a "campaign/party source." If a source was unidentified but was not connected to a campaign, it was coded as "Anonymous." In analyzing the data, the researchers further subdivided the anonymous sources into "Anonymous officials," such as "one former Capitol Hill staffer who asked to remain anonymous"; and "Anonymous 'real people,'" such as an unnamed "woman in denim shorts and a tank top" quoted at a political rally.

Polls and advertisements often were problematic. Several stories attributed information to "a recent poll" or "polls say" without naming an opinion survey anywhere in the text. Such source references were coded as polls, despite the lack of specificity. Similarly, some stories attributed information to advertisements that were not specifically identified; these sources were coded as ads.

One of the authors was responsible for coding the *Times-Dispatch* stories, the other for the *Virginian-Pilot* stories. Each author read and coded his set of stories twice. Then the authors together reviewed all stories and sources in both papers for consistency of coding. When they disagreed, they reviewed the article in light of similar stories and reached an agreement. Most cases were clear; changes usually involved moving a story origin or story content code into or out of the "elements of both" category. Difficulties in source coding were concentrated in dealing with various unidentified sources. As a final step, each researcher took a random sample of about 10 percent of stories from the paper he did not originally code and coded both stories and sources. This new coding was compared with the previous coding done by the other researcher and the outcomes were compared. Using the Holsti formula (1969, in Wimmer and Dominick, 1987), reliabilities were figured. For the story origins, the reliability was 95 percent; on story topic, 90 percent; and on sources, 94 percent.

The data from the above content analysis were entered into Microsoft Excel. For each newspaper, the researchers created two tables. One table listed each story. Each record included a story identification number, the headline, date, page, story origin code, story content code and other basic information. The other table listed each source in each story. Each record in this table included the story identification number; the original source citation; the source's name (standardized as "Last name, First name"); the source's code; and possible notes. Several hours were spent cleaning the data and checking their integrity. These tasks involved fixing misspelled names and ensuring consistency in coding. The tables then were imported into Microsoft

Access, a database manager. Access can link the tables according to the story identification number – so that, for example, one could isolate all of the sources cited in campaign/event-driven stories. The data analysis was done in both Excel, especially with its PivotTable feature, and Access, with queries that involved joining, grouping and cross-tabulations.

Results

The results of these analyses are presented below at they relate to each of the hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1: Campaign/event-driven stories compared with independent/enterprise stories

The results of this analysis are shown in Table 1. Of the 120 stories from the *Virginian-Pilot*, about 44 percent were coded as campaign/event-driven, compared with about 75 percent of the 95 stories from the *Times-Dispatch*. Conversely, 55 percent of the *Virginian-Pilot* articles were independent/enterprise stories, compared with about 25 percent of the *Times-Dispatch* stories. It seems clear that the first hypothesis is supported. A higher percentage of the Senate race coverage in the civic journalism newspaper (*The Pilot*) was independent of campaign events – i.e., not the direct result of press conferences, speeches, press releases and other events staged by the campaigns or candidates.[2]

Table 1: Story Origin – Campaign/Event-Driven or Independent/Enterprise

	Norfolk Virginian-Pilot		**Richmond Times-Dispatch**	
Story origin code	Number of stories	As percent of all stories	Number of stories	As percent of all stories
Campaign/event-driven	53	44.2%	71	74.7%
Independent/enterprise	66	55.0%	24	25.3%
Campaign/event & enterprise	1	0.8%	0	0.0%
Total stories	120	100.0%	95	100.0%

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[2] No statistical tests are provided because we present results from a census of all stories about the U.S. Senate election in Virginia between Sept. 2 and Nov. 8, 2000 published in the two newspapers. Since it is not a sample, no statistical tests are necessary.

Hypothesis 2:
Issue coverage compared with "horse race" coverage

Table 2 shows these results. It is clear that the *Virginian-Pilot* devoted a larger proportion (about 74 percent) of its coverage to the candidates' issue positions, policy statements, attitudes and character than did the *Times-Dispatch* (about 56 percent). The difference between the two newspapers is less if one includes stories that contained substantial elements of both issue positions and campaign horse race: About 83 percent for the *Virginian-Pilot*'s stories were primarily or partly about issues, vs. about 72 percent of the *Times-Dispatch* stories. About 17 percent of *The Pilot* stories were mostly or completely about the campaign horse race or process, compared with about 28 percent of the *Times-Dispatch* stories. So, again the hypothesis is supported. The civic journalism newspaper devoted more of its Senate race coverage to issues than did the traditional paper, which focused somewhat more on the campaign process or horse race.

Table 2: Story Content – Issues vs. "Horse Race"

	Norfolk Virginian-Pilot		**Richmond Times-Dispatch**	
Story content code	Number of stories	As percent of all stories	Number of stories	As percent of all stories
Process/horse race	20	16.7%	27	28.4%
Issues	89	74.2%	53	55.8%
Issues & process	11	9.2%	15	15.8%
Total stories	120	100.0%	95	100.0%

The differences between *The Virginian-Pilot* and the *Times-Dispatch* are even clearer when the story origin and story content codes are cross-tabulated, as show in Table 3. Slightly more than half of *The Pilot*'s stories had an independent/enterprise origin *and* focused primarily on issues – the quintessential story by the standards of civic journalism. In contrast, less than 16 percent of the *Times-Dispatch* stories fell into this category.

Table 3: Story Origin and Content –
Campaign-Driven Process Stories vs. Independent/Enterprise Issue Stories

	Norfolk Virginian-Pilot		Richmond Times-Dispatch	
Story origin and content code	Number of stories	As percent of all stories	Number of stories	As percent of all stories
Campaign/event-driven & issues	27	22.5%	38	40.0%
Campaign/event-driven & process/horse race	17	14.2%	18	18.9%
Campaign/event-driven & both issues and process/horse race	9	7.5%	15	15.8%
Independent/enterprise & issues	61	50.8%	15	15.8%
Independent/enterprise & process/horse race	3	2.5%	9	9.5%
Independent/enterprise & both issues and process/horse race	2	1.7%	0	0%
Both campaign/event-drive & independent/enterprise; & issues	1	0.8%	0	0%
Total stories	120	100.0%	95	100.0%

Hypothesis 3:
Number and types of sources

The *Times-Dispatch* had more sources per story than *The Virginian-Pilot*, 5.84 compared with 4.46. The hypothesis predicted the reverse, that the civic journalism paper would include more sources. However, further analysis showed that while the *Times-Dispatch* used more sources in an average story, it more often cited the same sources. Across the entire set of stories for each paper, *The Pilot* had more unique sources (279) than did the *Times-Dispatch* (242). *The Pilot* cited a larger number of distinct sources and did not turn to the same sources as frequently as the *Times-Dispatch* did.

An analysis of individual sources indicates this clearly. Table 4 shows the frequency with which campaign officials and spokesmen, the candidates themselves and academic political commentators were quoted. While the two candidates were quoted slightly more often in *The Pilot*, all of the other sources were quoted more frequently in the *Times-Dispatch* and accounted for higher percentages of the total source citations.

For example, the spokesman for the Robb campaign, Mo Elliethee, was quoted 29 times in the *Times-Dispatch*, representing 5.2 percent of all of the paper's source citations, and 16 times in *The Virginian-Pilot*, or 3 percent of all its source citations. The Allen campaign equivalent source, Tim Murtaugh, was quoted 28 times in the *Times-Dispatch*, 5 percent of its total source citations, and 13 times in *The Virginian-Pilot*, 2.4 percent of its total source citations. The use of several academic sources was also quite different. The *Times-Dispatch* quoted five Virginia academic sources (Larry Sabato, Robert Holsworth, Stephen Farnsworth, Mark Rozell and Scott Keeter) a total of 32 times, or 5.8 percent of all its source citations, compared to 15 times in *The Virginian-Pilot*, or 2.8 percent of all its source citations.

Table 4: Citing Candidates, Campaign Officials and Commentators

	Norfolk Virginian-Pilot		**Richmond Times-Dispatch**	
Source	Number of citations	As percent of all sources	Number of citations	As percent of all sources
Charles Robb	47	8.8%	48	8.6%
George Allen	42	7.9%	36	6.5%
Robb campaign spokesman	16	3.0%	29	5.2%
Allen campaign spokesman	13	2.4%	28	5.0%
Robb campaign manager	0	0%	10	1.8%
Allen campaign manager	4	0.7%	12	2.2%
Subtotals: Candidate, campaign spokesmen and campaign managers	122	22.8%	163	29.4%
Academic commentators	15	2.8%	32	5.8%
Total source citations in all stories	535	100.0%	555	100.0%

This illustrates that the main thrust of Hypothesis 3 is supported, that a larger proportion of the *Times-Dispatch* sources fall in the campaign, party and political establishment categories. This analysis is extended in Table 5, which shows the results for all source categories. The percentages for all political establishment categories – campaign and party, other political establishment, former administration and unidentified officials – are higher for the *Times-Dispatch*; and when all these categories are combined, the difference between the papers is quite striking. Together, the four categories accounted for about 58 percent of all source citations in the *Times-Dispatch*, compared with about 43 percent of all source citations in *The Virginian-Pilot*. In addition, a key component of civic journalism is the use of non-elite, general public, "real people" sources. These accounted for about 12 percent of *The Pilot*'s source citations, compared with about 3 percent of the *Times-Dispatch*'s sources. The *Times-Dispatch* also referred more frequently to poll results, perhaps reflecting a more "horse-race" orientation.

Table 5: Frequency of Source Categories

Source category	Norfolk Virginian-Pilot		Richmond Times-Dispatch	
	Total number of references	As percent of all sources	Total number of references	As percent of all sources
Campaign/party sources	167	31.2%	207	37.3%
Political establishment sources	45	8.4%	73	13.2%
Polls	14	2.6%	46	8.3%
Pundits, academics, think tanks and interest groups	81	15.1%	89	16.0%
Former administration members	8	1.5%	25	4.5%
Unidentified officials	8	1.5%	16	2.9%
Ads	51	9.5%	44	7.9%
Government agencies/documents	46	8.6%	11	2.0%
Public, made available by campaign	8	1.5%	14	2.5%
Unaffiliated public (real people)	60	11.2%	15	2.7%
Unidentified "real people"	5	0.9%	0	0.0%
Other (other media, etc.)	42	7.9%	15	2.7%
Total source citations in all stories	535	100.0%	555	100.0%

To summarize, the results show strong support for the hypotheses generated for this study. The elements of civic journalism are clearly more likely to be present in *The Virginian-Pilot* than in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch.*

Discussion

Civic journalism remains controversial. Implementation of civic journalism principles often has been inconsistent and limited to special projects, even in those papers that support it. *The Virginian-Pilot* claims to have made civic journalism a part of routine news coverage, thus changing the newspaper's "culture." If that is so, then daily news coverage by *The Pilot* and the *Times-Dispatch* should be quite different. The Senate race presented an opportunity to see, in effect, if *The Pilot* practices what it preaches – and whether the results are truly different from the coverage by its traditional-newspaper, intra-state rival. We conclude from these data that *The Pilot* indeed is distinctive. Its coverage of the Senate election is clearly different from that of the *Times-Dispatch* in terms of story choice and framing as well as source selection.

That being said, these differences may not all be due to the adoption of civic journalism principles by *The Pilot.* While the papers show some similarities in the size of their circulations and the communities they serve, the communities themselves are quite different. As the state capital, Richmond is the seat of the Virginia political establishment, which, along with state employees, constitutes a significant segment of the *Times-Dispatch* readership. Thus, the *Times Dispatch*, with the kind of coverage indicated here, may be serving its audience. Indeed, if the *Times Dispatch* were to adopt civic journalism principles, it still might provide more coverage of political elites than *The Virginian-Pilot.*

The Pilot serves the Hampton Roads region of Virginia, a more transient and diverse area, with its economy based in the military and tourism. It is not as attached to the political elites of Virginia, and its readership may not be as deeply rooted in the state's traditions or as interested in the inner workings of the state's political machinery.

Therefore, not all the differences between these two newspapers, as illustrated here, may stem from the adoption of civic journalism by one and its rejection by the other. However, the difference in the papers' approach is clear in the way they reported who won the Senate seat. On the morning after the election, the *Times Dispatch* announced Allen's victory over Robb with a 51-paragraph story: Only one paragraph was devoted to issues – and that one in a horse-race context. *The Pilot*'s story about Allen's election was 28 paragraphs long, with seven paragraphs devoted to the issues that were important to the campaign.

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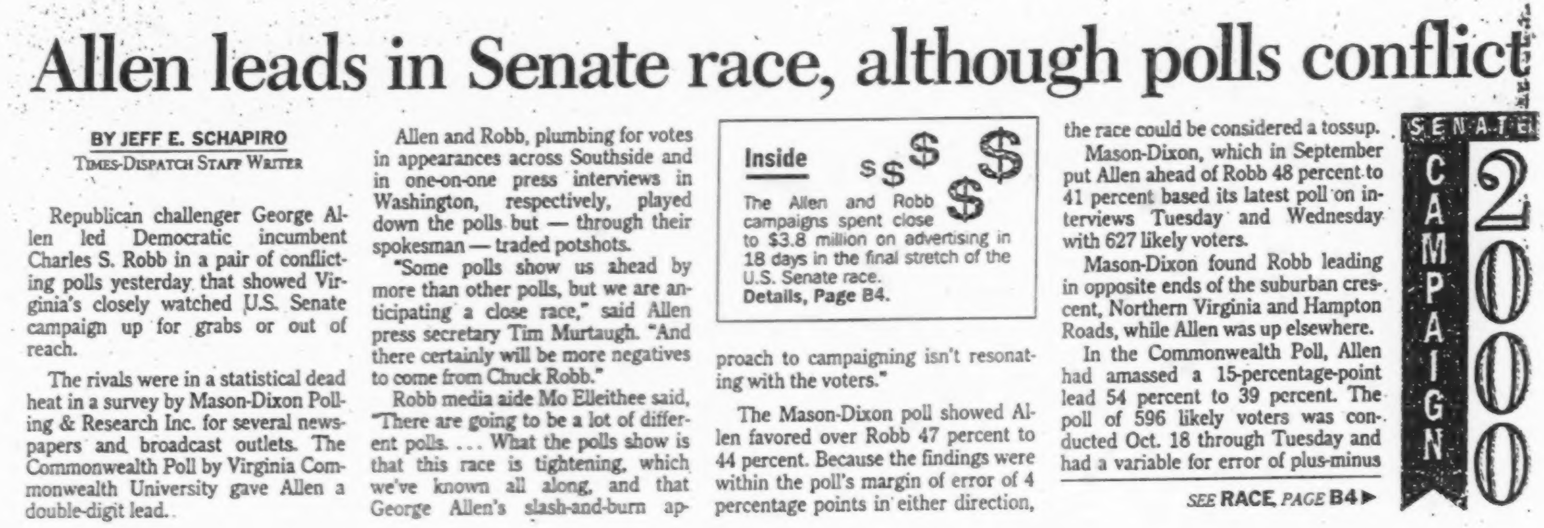
Exhibit A

From the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*,
Oct. 27, 2000; Page B1

Example of a story coded as
"Campaign/event-driven" and
"Campaign process/horse race"



Allen leads in Senate race, although polls conflict

SENATE CAMPAIGN 2000

BY JEFF E. SCHAPIRO
TIMES-DISPATCH STAFF WRITER

Republican challenger George Allen led Democratic incumbent Charles S. Robb in a pair of conflicting polls yesterday that showed Virginia's closely watched U.S. Senate campaign up for grabs or out of reach.

The rivals were in a statistical dead heat in a survey by Mason-Dixon Polling & Research Inc. for several newspapers and broadcast outlets. The Commonwealth Poll by Virginia Commonwealth University gave Allen a double-digit lead.

Allen and Robb, plumbing for votes in appearances across Southside and in one-on-one press interviews in Washington, respectively, played down the polls but — through their spokesman — traded potshots.

"Some polls show us ahead by more than other polls, but we are anticipating a close race," said Allen press secretary Tim Murtaugh. "And there certainly will be more negatives to come from Chuck Robb."

Robb media aide Mo Elleithee said, "There are going to be a lot of different polls. . . . What the polls show is that this race is tightening, which we've known all along, and that George Allen's slash-and-burn approach to campaigning isn't resonating with the voters."

Inside $ $ $ $ $

The Allen and Robb campaigns spent close to $3.8 million on advertising in 18 days in the final stretch of the U.S. Senate race.
Details, Page B4.

The Mason-Dixon poll showed Allen favored over Robb 47 percent to 44 percent. Because the findings were within the poll's margin of error of 4 percentage points in either direction, the race could be considered a tossup.

Mason-Dixon, which in September put Allen ahead of Robb 48 percent to 41 percent based its latest poll on interviews Tuesday and Wednesday with 627 likely voters.

Mason-Dixon found Robb leading in opposite ends of the suburban crescent, Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads, while Allen was up elsewhere.

In the Commonwealth Poll, Allen had amassed a 15-percentage-point lead 54 percent to 39 percent. The poll of 596 likely voters was conducted Oct. 18 through Tuesday and had a variable for error of plus-minus

SEE **RACE**, *PAGE* **B4▶**

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B4 Friday, October 27, 2000

Race

— *FROM PAGE* **B1**

4.5 percentage points.

The Commonwealth Poll showed Robb winning in only one corner of the state — his home base of Northern Virginia. Allen controlled the rest of Virginia, with Tidewater tied.

Scott J. Keeter, a political scientist at George Mason University who previously supervised the VCU poll, said one explanation for the different results may be that the Commonwealth Poll — unlike Mason-Dixon — does not reflect Robb's "upside potential" with black voters.

Regardless of Allen's big lead, the Senate race could be decided by turnout, the Commonwealth Poll said. The poll found greater intensity among Republicans than Democrats, but Robb getting a bigger boost from moderate voters.

Robb

Allen yesterday pitched to his conservative base, traveling across the rural belt abutting Virginia's border with North Carolina. The former governor stopped in Danville, South Boston, Emporia, Franklin and Suffolk.

Allen talked up tax cuts, including his proposed $2,000-per-family education credit that Robb says would prevent the nation from pumping additional funds into schools and defense and from shoring up Social Security and Medicare.

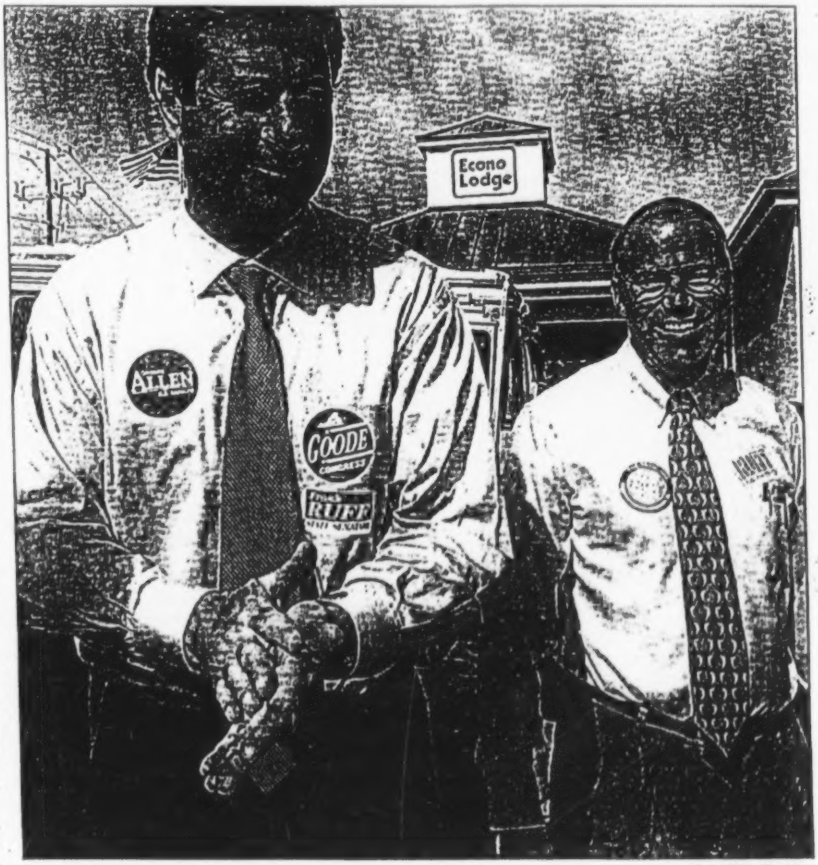
With Congress still in session, Robb was still in Washington. Between floor votes, the two-term Democrat met with reporters, aides said.

The Robb campaign took exception to a Republican flier mailed across traffic-clogged Northern Virginians accusing the senator of slashing $213 million from the Highway Department budget during his term as governor from 1982 to 1986.

Though Robb counters that road construction accelerated on his watch, in contrast with Allen's, his main beef with the brochure is that it's illustrated with a photograph of a congested highway in California, Allen's native state.

Ray Allen Jr., the political consultant who prepared the direct-mail piece, said he used a stock snapshot bought from a photo agency to "avoid various copyright problems." He said Robb's complaints about the picture apparently are intended to "divert attention from [his] abysmal record" on road building.

But Elleithee said that the GOP's use of the California photo is proof that candidate Allen is "out of touch with Virginia's transportation woes."



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Republican U.S. Senate candidate George Allen appeared in South Boston yesterday with state Senate candidate Frank M. Ruff. Sen. Charles S. Robb, D-Va., was at a session of Congress.

- Contact Jeff E. Schapiro at (804) 649-6814 or jschapiro@timesdispatch.com
- Times-Dispatch staff writer Jamie C. Ruff contributed to this report.

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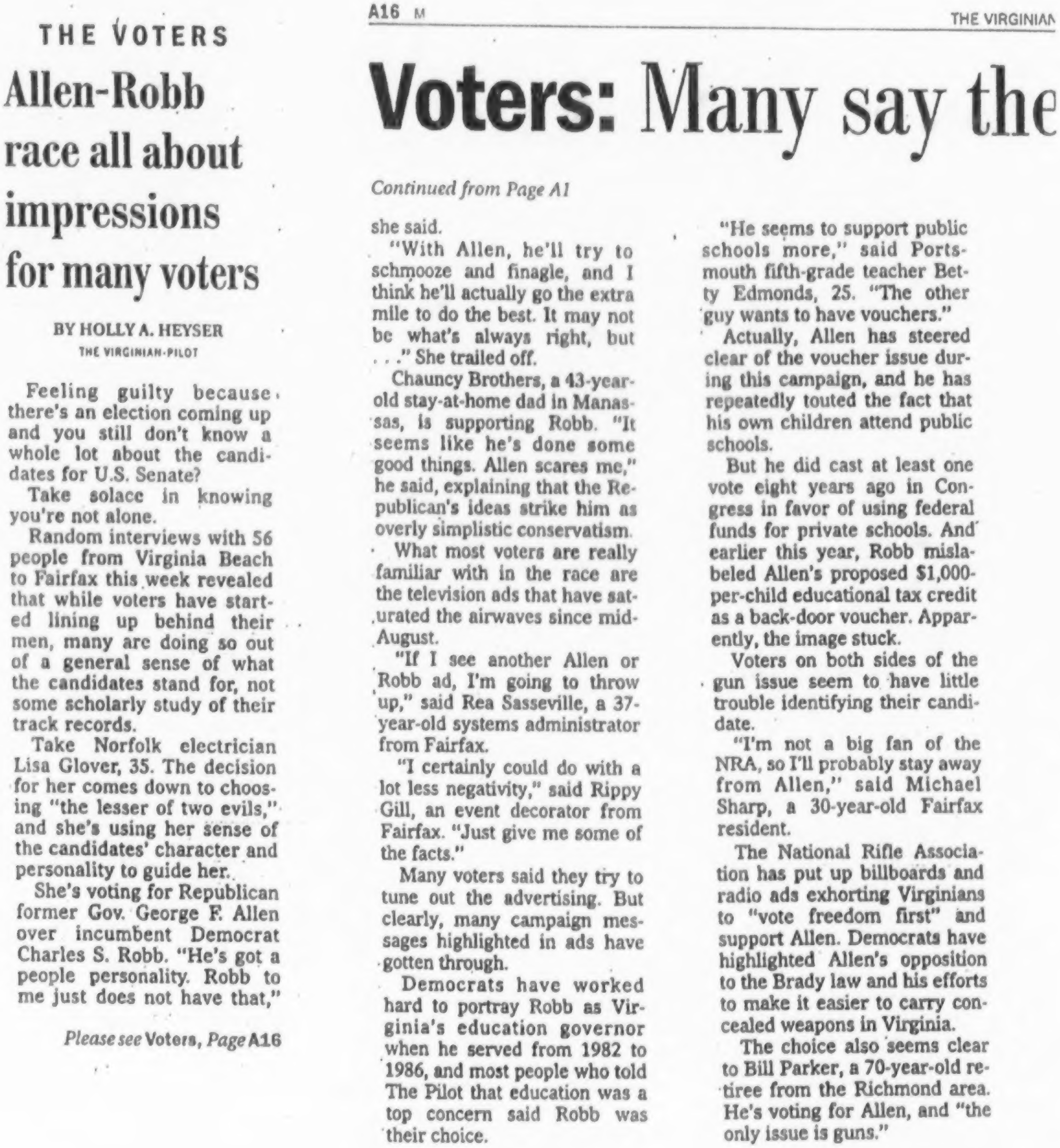
Exhibit B

From *The Virginian-Pilot*, Oct. 27, 2000; Page A-1

Example of a story coded as "Independent/enterprise" and "Candidate issues, policies, character"



THE VOTERS

Allen-Robb race all about impressions for many voters

BY HOLLY A. HEYSER
THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

Feeling guilty because there's an election coming up and you still don't know a whole lot about the candidates for U.S. Senate?

Take solace in knowing you're not alone.

Random interviews with 56 people from Virginia Beach to Fairfax this week revealed that while voters have started lining up behind their men, many are doing so out of a general sense of what the candidates stand for, not some scholarly study of their track records.

Take Norfolk electrician Lisa Glover, 35. The decision for her comes down to choosing "the lesser of two evils," and she's using her sense of the candidates' character and personality to guide her.

She's voting for Republican former Gov. George F. Allen over incumbent Democrat Charles S. Robb. "He's got a people personality. Robb to me just does not have that,"

Please see Voters, *Page* A16

A16 M THE VIRGINIAN

Voters: Many say the

Continued from Page A1

she said.

"With Allen, he'll try to schmooze and finagle, and I think he'll actually go the extra mile to do the best. It may not be what's always right, but . . ." She trailed off.

Chauncy Brothers, a 43-year-old stay-at-home dad in Manassas, is supporting Robb. "It seems like he's done some good things. Allen scares me," he said, explaining that the Republican's ideas strike him as overly simplistic conservatism.

What most voters are really familiar with in the race are the television ads that have saturated the airwaves since mid-August.

"If I see another Allen or Robb ad, I'm going to throw up," said Rea Sasseville, a 37-year-old systems administrator from Fairfax.

"I certainly could do with a lot less negativity," said Rippy Gill, an event decorator from Fairfax. "Just give me some of the facts."

Many voters said they try to tune out the advertising. But clearly, many campaign messages highlighted in ads have gotten through.

Democrats have worked hard to portray Robb as Virginia's education governor when he served from 1982 to 1986, and most people who told The Pilot that education was a top concern said Robb was their choice.

"He seems to support public schools more," said Portsmouth fifth-grade teacher Betty Edmonds, 25. "The other guy wants to have vouchers."

Actually, Allen has steered clear of the voucher issue during this campaign, and he has repeatedly touted the fact that his own children attend public schools.

But he did cast at least one vote eight years ago in Congress in favor of using federal funds for private schools. And earlier this year, Robb mislabeled Allen's proposed $1,000-per-child educational tax credit as a back-door voucher. Apparently, the image stuck.

Voters on both sides of the gun issue seem to have little trouble identifying their candidate.

"I'm not a big fan of the NRA, so I'll probably stay away from Allen," said Michael Sharp, a 30-year-old Fairfax resident.

The National Rifle Association has put up billboards and radio ads exhorting Virginians to "vote freedom first" and support Allen. Democrats have highlighted Allen's opposition to the Brady law and his efforts to make it easier to carry concealed weapons in Virginia.

The choice also seems clear to Bill Parker, a 70-year-old retiree from the Richmond area. He's voting for Allen, and "the only issue is guns."

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THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT **NATION & WORLD** FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2000

Many say they try to tune out television ads

Voters who were concerned about taxes were inclined to back Allen as well. "I'm tired of high taxes, and I don't need to be looked after from cradle to grave like a lot of Democrats do," said Amissville resident M.D. Smith, a 44-year-old software tester.

None of the voters interviewed brought up Allen's proposed education tax credit — which is seen in political circles as one of his most appealing campaign promises — as a key issue in their decision.

But many invoked the candidate's personality and character.

"He's a plain-speaking non-politician," said Mark Avery, a 48-year-old consultant from Fairfax.

"He's more honorable," said Norma Parker, who's married to Bill Parker. She can't shake off memories of Robb's scandals in the 1980s — a nude massage by a former Miss Virginia USA in a New York hotel room, and his presence at parties in Virginia Beach where cocaine was being used. (Robb said he did not use drugs and didn't know drugs were being used at the parties.)

Holly Golliver Rossman, a 55-year-old substitute teacher from Manassas, thinks Robb was the better governor of Virginia and is the better candidate now. About Allen, she has a gut feeling: "I just dislike the man."

The voters with some of the sharpest impressions about candidates belonged to special interest groups with tight information-sharing networks.

Donna Barnes, a 40-year-old Portsmouth maintenance worker, says it's "Robb all the way" for her because of his stands on gay issues. She has read about his record in several gay publications.

Judge Haugen, a 45-year-old history student from Norfolk, already had lost respect for Robb because of his pro-Clinton votes during the impeachment. "But I'm also a biker, and I don't particularly care for the ad he ran," he said.

Earlier this month, the Democratic Party ran an anti-Allen ad in Northern Virginia, but the news of the ad's negative imagery of bikers quickly spread around the state over the Internet.

In the ad, viewers first see a hand pulling a black gun out of a case, then footage of Allen shaking hands with bikers wearing Harley-Davidson insignia.

"The implication was that anybody with a gun is a bad guy, anybody that rides a motorcycle is a bad guy," Haugen said. "It touched my nerve."

■ *Reach Holly A. Heyser at heyser@richmond.infi.net or (804) 697-1563.*

LOLITA JONES file photo/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Democrats have tried to portray Charles S. Robb as Virginia's education governor; surveyed voters concerned about education say Robb is their choice.

STEVE HELBER file photo/ASSOCIATED PRESS

The gun issue has helped or hurt Republican George F. Allen. Surveyed voters who back gun ownership say they'll go with Allen.